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MASTER CLARKE:

AS A Play,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

T. J. SERLE, Esq.

MEMBER OF THE DRAMATIC AUTHORS' SOCIETY.

AS PERFORMED AT

THE CHAMPIONSHIP THEATRE, NEW-STREET,

Saturday, September 26, 1840.

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A PLAY,

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DEDICATION.

TO SAMUEL JAMES ARNOLD, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

On no account do I more heartily wish the following Play were much better than it is, than this—that it might prove a more lasting memorial of the respect I desire to pay in dedicating it to you. As the last of those Proprietors of Theatres who considered their best property the prosperity of Authors and Actors, and their license a trust for the benefit of the stage—and as one to whom I am personally indebted for much kind encouragement bestowed in that spirit, you will allow me to have the gratification of subscribing myself on this occasion,

My dear Sir,

Your grateful friend and servant,

THOMAS JAMES SERLE.

*Walnut-tree Walk, Lambeth,
September 23, 1840.*



P R E F A C E.

THE intention in writing the following Play was to exhibit in the character of *Richard Cromwell*, the worth of that unostentatious forbearance which, without the pretence of despising advantages, knows when to desist from contending for them, and the philosophy which, passive as to its mere fortunes, becomes active in the vindication of its duties ; this country gentleman, seated for awhile on the throne, appeared to me a fit type of such a character. It may possibly be questioned whether this conception could be made sufficiently striking for theatrical interest ; whether in this Play, brought within such a length as is necessary for the purposes of the stage, sufficient traces of a design, carried out by minute touches, can be discovered, is a question for the audience alone to answer. I have not, like *Mr. Puff*, "printed it all ;" as, in this instance and with this explanation, I have considered the publisher's money of more consequence than my reputation. The matter is mentioned only because I would not have any barrenness of language or want of deeper sentiment in this effort prejudice some semi-dramatic attempts which I am now preparing, and for the interest of which, except as far as others are concerned, I feel most anxious in the fate of this drama.

The publication will accompany the representation, and this

must limit my acknowledgments to those concerned in the production to my thanks for their zeal and good intentions; indeed, such as are offered for effects produced must often savour of the puff by implication, as the author must claim, at least, to have afforded the opportunity of which he declares the actor to have triumphantly availed himself.

Besides all that I could tender to Mr. MACREADY for his professional exertions—for which I sincerely regret that I have given him so limited a scope—the anxious suggestions and careful consideration he has bestowed on the whole Play, claim my gratitude as still more friendly services, the services of judgment, candour, and patient labour—the rarest perhaps that are rendered. From Miss HELEN FAUCIT, Mrs. W. CLIFFORD, Mr. J. WEBSTER, Mr. G. BENNETT, Mr. STRICKLAND, Mr. Howe, and others of the *Dramatis Personæ*, I have already received every token of energetic co-operation and good-will to cheer the anxiety of rehearsals: they will not doubt me, when I wish them the reward they so kindly and honestly aim at—success.

To Mr. WEBSTER, as manager, for his liberality in the whole of our transactions, including the production of the Play, I am as much indebted as for his good nature in acting a part that a worse performer might have thought it incumbent on him to refuse.

I conceive that no acted drama should be published, with which the author should not, if his conviction allow him, follow the example of Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, in his preface to *Glencoe*, in claiming for those who have not the opportunity of a hearing, the abolition of the dramatic monopoly. The public

must not judge by what it sees produced even through the press, but by that spirit which, like *Clarence's* soul, is denied to pour itself forth, even upon paper, by the repressing fear or the mere doubt of neglect. No fault is to be attributed to the lessees of theatres—they are in most instances the martyrs of the stage, standing between the proprietors, who exact rents for permission to exercise the art, and the performers and authors, whom they endeavour to pay. The objection is to the system by which the drama is perishing at the very moment that it ought to be brilliantly renewed. Even authors whose plays can be represented, are denied the opportunity of those bold and repeated experiments which, disregarding occasional failure, make up the sum of great success. The Elizabethan stage itself owed very much to this facility. The very title-page of Ben Jonson's "New Inn" tells us so: who would lose or neglect its beautiful poetry because, as he says, "it was never acted, but most negligently played by some, the king's servants, and more squeamishly beheld and censur'd by others, the king's subjects?" With the expenses of all sorts that do not conduce to the representation of the drama, a lessee cannot afford to act a play without a thorough belief, correct or mistaken as it may be, that it wil! run a certain number of nights and attract a certain number of people. He is a bankrupt upon any other calculation; and into this he must take the fitness of parts for actors, and even the relative power of the characters themselves. Indeed the public rarely comes to see plays—it is an actor in a part that attracts, and better still for the treasury, that dramatic cock-fighting which puts the steel spurs on an *Othello* and an *Iago*, and makes the interest of the representa-

tion not SHAKSPERE'S story, but the relative "*pluck*" of Mr. KEAN and Mr. YOUNG.

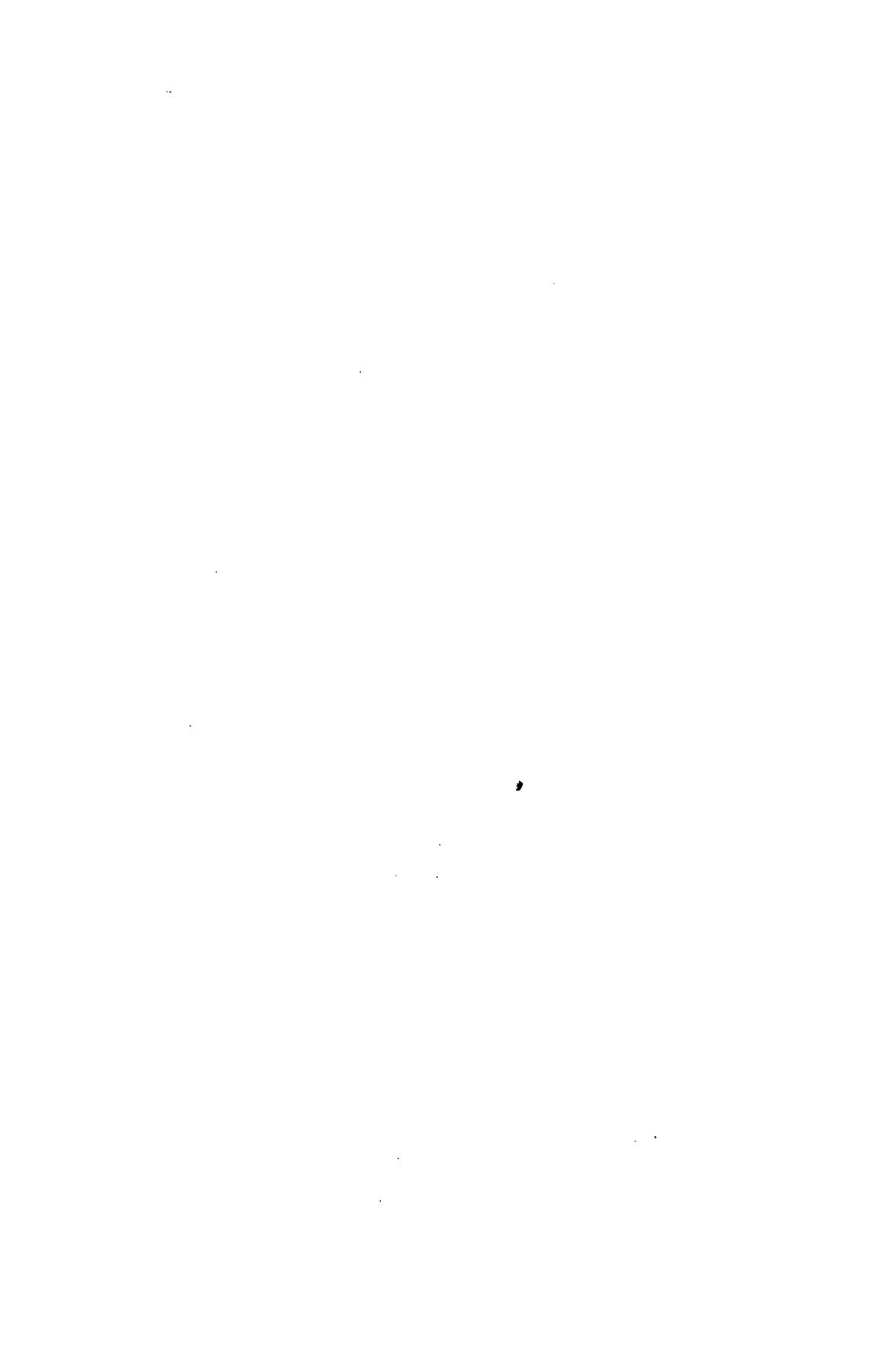
By this method of estimation the public deprives itself of much delight, for it puts it out of the power of the first-rate actor to represent a secondary part, lest he should lose caste by the generous enthusiasm or right-minded taste with which he pursues his avocation.

A preface is no place to enlarge upon such matters, but one may hint that all this is "*from* the purpose of Playing," and assert the sincere belief that the main source of such evils is the dramatic monopoly, granted in corruption and exercised in ignorance, which enslaves that the peculiar condition of whose health is to be free, and the necessity of whose welfare is to command.

Tramatis Personæ.

*As acted at the Theatre Royal, Hay-market, on Saturday,
September 26, 1840.*

KING CHARLES II.	MR. J. WEBSTER.
RICHARD CROMWELL	MR. MACREADY.
DANISH AMBASSADOR	
FRENCH AMBASSADOR	MR. GALLOT.
GENERAL LORD DISBROWE	MR. PHELPS.
LORD FALCONBERG	MR. WORRELL.
INGOLDSBY	MR. W. LACY.
LORD THURLOE	MR. GOUGH.
LORD HYDE	MR. WALDRON.
BERRY	MR. CAULFIELD.
SIR RICHARD WILLIS	MR. HOWE.
SIR JACOB CHUBB	MR. STRICKLAND.
SMOOTHLY	MR. OXBERRY.
PERCEVAL	MR. GREEN.
CAPTAIN DARNEL	MR. G. BENNETT.
ROBERT DEAGLE	MR. WEBSTER.
OFFICER	
ATTENDANT	
LADY DOROTHY CROMWELL	MISS H. FAUCIT.
LADY CHUBB	MRS. CLIFFORD.
PATIENCE	MISS GROVE.



MASTER CLARKE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*The Hall of State of the Palace of Whitehall—A throne under a canopy—Large folding doors—The room newly and sumptuously furnished—Gentlemen waiting in groups—PERCEVAL with THURLOE—SIR JACOB CHUBB with INGOLDSBY—SMOOTHLY with ROBERT DEAGLE, CITIZENS, &c.—The whole scene in loud confusion—Two or three exclaim, “Hush! hush!—His Highness!”—All turn in silence.*

Smo. No, no; a false alarm. Now, sir?

Dea. As I said, I am but an humble household servant of his highness—

Smo. Tut! tut! sir, you're too modest; you have access to his ear when others can't put in a word. Well, you see my account for the funeral of his highness, that's (*points downwards*) buried; he is up there of course—but my account is no trifl—the costliest funeral that was ever seen in England, as it ought to be of course, for such a man as the great Protector, Oliver—and I've done my duty by his present highness, though I say it. Here's an address, with an offer of all our lives and fortunes. Now, if I could but see my way in that account in case anything should happen—they say the army—

Dea. Oh, we shall find means to keep the army quiet.

Smo. I hope so. Still, if anything should happen?

Dea. Do you come to speak treason in the Protector's own palace?

Smo. Dear me!—treason! I! with such an address as this in my hand—but I forget, nobody sees. (*Offering purse.*) Take it at once.

[*Groupe turn, and stop to speak with INGOLDSBY—They shortly separate—One crossing over and joining PRE-CEVAL as THURLOE leaves him—The other two are joined by two from ante-room, and remain in corner.*]

Dea. I must, for fear you should be observed; this way, if anything can be done—

[*They walk up, crossing stage to folding doors, and pass through—THURLOE coming forward with PRE-CEVAL.*]

The Ambassador from Denmark, too, has moved
His highness in that business of Charles Stuart,
Which you proposed to me; but wait till the Protector
Can speak with you alone.

[*Crossing to INGOLDSBY.*]

Lord Ingoldsby,
You have one with you to present an address;
His Highness prays you to be brief with him,
And so to pass on at once—the time is busy.

[*Exit THURLOE.*]

Ing. I warrant we'll not waste a moment of it;
I'll march my knight across at the step of charge.

Chu. (*Advancing as THURLOE leaves INGOLDSBY.*) May I
ask your lordship who that is?

Ing. The secretary
Thurloe—

Chu. Aha! a great man. They'll be sure
To ask at Quidlingboro' who I've seen.
A great man that for one! Do you know, my lord,
When I had the honor of receiving knighthood

From the great Oliver, I never saw him ;
I heard his voice just ringing in my ears
As sharp as a musket shot—"Arise, Sir Jacob."
I dared not raise
My eyes to him ; though when I went back, Sir Jacob,
The folks of Quidlingboro' rather smiled
To think I could hardly tell how I was made so.
I'll take 'em a full account of this Protector.
Use makes us bolder.

Ing. Look, but pass at once—
You will offend his highness to detain him.
Chu. I'd not offend his highness for the world—
I know, as an alderman, what men in office feel
When those about them will be tedious.
I speak as an independent man—being knighted,
I've nothing to ask of the Protector.

Ing. Nothing !
Chu. Why—since your lordship hints it, he might make me
A baronet. I
Confess I should like to be called after my death
"Sir Jacob, the first baronet, the founder
"Of all the Chubbs."
Would your lordship kindly mention it to his highness ?

Ing. If upon some good cause.
Chu. The presentation
Of this address—'tis worth a baronetcy.
Ing. Pledging your lives and fortunes ?
Chu. Oh, that's nothing !
All the addresses do that ; but, the comparison
Of his late highness with Moses, Job, and Noah,
With the figures about the ark and the Red Sea !
I put in them myself. Would your lordship read it ?

Ing. No, no ; I'll think of the baronetcy.
Chu. Aye !
We could get up another address, and compare
His present living highness to anybody

He would prefer.

All would have suited him as well as his father.

Good luck ! that we should be praising a dead man,

When we might have got something from a living one.

[During this FALCONBERG has entered folding doors.]

Fal. (To INGOLDSBY.) I must speak with you—news from the army, Ingoldsby.

This place won't serve—I must consult with you—

'Tis of deep moment, as you love his highness !

Ing. Nay, I am with you—no word—let us walk.

[Exit FALCONBERG and INGOLDSBY.]

Chu. (Knocking the address about in his hands.) Such a waste of precious words, when he can't read 'em !—

But that is scan-mag to an alderman.

I could call myself an ass !—no one would think it,

But I could. (Trumpet sounds.) He's coming !

[All move towards their places, beside and in front of the throne—OFFICERS, &c., from ante-room crowd up the doors.]

Dear me ! how I quiver !

Where is my friend—Lord Ingoldsby ? What ! gone ?

At such a moment ! gone ! They're coming ! Gone !

Why, that's his cloak ! there ! when he should be here.

[Going to the door.]

I shall lose my senses ! My lord ! Lord Ingoldsby !

Sure he don't know me, for he walks away ;

I must catch him, or lose the baronetcy.

[Exit.]

[During this time several LORDS and GENTLEMEN have entered the room as preceding RICHARD CROMWELL, who now enters, accompanied by THURLOE, and the FRENCH and DANISH AMBASSADORS.]

Cro. (To FRENCH AMB.) My lord, we thank our royal brother of France

Heartily for the assurance that you bring us,
And we do not fear
It being the nation's might, not ours, we proffer.
Our brother Louis shall find this friendly state
Chang'd only in the name of him who rules it.

(To DANISH AMBASSADOR, who advances from back.)

The King of Denmark's proffer'd service to us,
We accept as friendly; by a private messenger
We'll answer him on whose behalf he has spoken.

[Joins FRENCH AMBASSADOR.]

Thu. *(Presenting.)* So, please your highness, Mr. Deputy
Smoothly,
With an address of Wardmote, which himself
And his fellow citizens lay at your highness' feet,
Condoling on the nation's loss and yours—
Yet, trusting all they have, and all they are,
To the guidance of your wisdom and your fortunes.

Cro. We accept their proffer with acknowledgments
As sincere as their own words. Speaking thus to you,
We speak to all who bring the like kind greetings,
If more be here in presence—and desire them
Thus to accept our answer and our thanks.

*[He extends his hand, which SMOOTHLY kisses, and
passes, as do the rest of the CITIZENS—RICHARD
CROMWELL talks with those around him.]*

Smo. *(Aside to DEAGLE.)* You'll not forget to speak about
the money?

Dea. Trust me—you will not be the worse for me.

[SMOOTHLY passes.]

Nor much the better.

[The CITIZENS, &c., begin to go out.]

Re-enter SIR JACOB CHUBB, breathless, followed by INGOLDSBY.

Chu. Pray, you now, my lord,
We shall be too late—they'll go—good luck, this fluster
To be presented in.

Ing. Come on at once!

[*He drags on SIR JACOB and presents him—SIR JACOB kneels hurriedly.*

So, please your highness, Sir Jacob Chubb—address
From Quidlingboro'—Condolence—your highness' father—
Congratulation on accession—offer
Of lives and fortunes.

[*RICHARD CROMWELL gives his hand, which SIR JACOB kisses—CROMWELL then continues his conversation with the others, turning quite from SIR JACOB.*

Ing. Come!

Chu. I hav'n't seen him!

And he wont turn this way.

Dea. (*Who has crossed to near the throne.*) Please to move on.

Chu. "Move on!"—the corporation of Quidlingboro'
Treated with "Move on!"

Ing. Farewell! I have business.

[*Exit.*

Chu. Gone! gone again! not even a sight of his highness,
Beyond his hat and cloak, stockings and shoes!
Tho' Quidlingboro's not so large as London,
It is a place of importance, politically,
As they may find.

Dea. (*Going up to him.*) The doors will soon be closed, sir.

Chu. Humph! thank you, sir—they'll slap 'em in one's
teeth next—

Right in one's teeth. Our borough, next election,
Sends Opposition members. Not even one look—
Not even so much as hear him speak one word!

Nothing to tell! I'll rouse the borough for this,
If ever a patriotic speech could do it.

(To Deagle.) I'm going, sir—I thank you—a fine Protector!

[Exit.

[During these speeches the AMBASSADORS have taken leave of RICHARD CROMWELL, and THURLOE has brought PERCEVAL to him, and given directions to the OFFICERS to close the folding doors, which they do—All are gone except the PROTECTOR, PERCEVAL, and ROBERT DEAGLE.]

Cro. Put these addresses with the others, Robert,
In the small cabinet; be careful of them,
For surely, never prince had so great wealth
On paper—I'd be private—to the door.
If any of the council seek to see me,
You may admit them.

[Exit ATTENDANT.

Enter LADY DOROTHY CROMWELL.

Lady C. First, a word with me—
For now I scarcely see you all the day,
Save in the company of those whom state,
Not kindness, brings around us.

Cro. (Kissing her.) You are right;
We need the rest and strength of love at home
To give us heart for toil, and strife and smiles,
More wearisome than anger. And yet—
But you regret your country life?

Lady C. Oh, no!
I only sometimes wish we could have both,
But never to yield this.

Cro. Yet we were happy.

Lady C. Aye, happy!

Cro. Is that nothing?—very happy.

I, with my hawk, or hound, on my good horse,
Drinking the fresh health of the morning air,
Till I could laugh of the mere merriment
That stirs in vigorous motion—you—

Lady C. Ah, I!

Left to my humble tasks about the house,
While you were following the hawk and hound,
And laughing with your merry hunting train.

Cro. Not always.

Lady C. No—not always.

Cro. When you chose

You had your horse, and your pet falcon too,
And every man in all the hamlets round,
Gentle or simple, for your servitor—
What could you have more?

Lady C. It was very well—

Very well, then.

Cro. And we had friends around us—honest neighbours—
Such as did all the duties of that name—
Wept and rejoic'd as we wept and rejoic'd.
Besides our own, your father and our children,
There were such fire-side faces of a night
As made old Winter jocund—there were voices
Out-chirped the merry cricket on the hearth—

Lady C. And our calm Sundays, moving tow'r'd the church,
Through humble ranks that waited our approach.

It was pleasant

To kneel in such pure charity. I love
That little church!

Cro. She sleeps within it. She—
Sweetest, best—I'd rest beside her there
When the hour comes.

Lady C. Keep even the thought far hence;
You have many left to live for—much to do
In life yourself.

Cro. Aye!

Lady C. And that cheerfully,
Cheerfully! nobly! bravely! proudly! I
Trust not alone to be your consort here;
Honor'd in your true greatness, but to be
The consort of your name, in many a page
That history shall write of weal to England
And glory to yourself.

Cro. If such may be my lot, and honor with it!
My course is clear—I'd strive to know the right,
And do it.

Lady C. And so leave a heritage
Unto your son, the fairest earth can offer.

Cro. A good name from his father, and a mind
Fram'd by his father's deeds.

Lady C. And England with them!

Cro. Aye, if it may be, England for my son,
And he for England, if his country's will
Be so, and he can serve it.

Enter INGOOLDSBY.

Cro. Ah! well returned, good namesake.

Ing. Good, my lord!

The news I bring is scarcely worth your welcome.

Cro. What news?

Lady C. What news, if I may hear it?

Cro. Speak!

Since you will bear part of my cares.

Lady C. I'd know them—

Should I not if—if I may—they touch me too.

Cro. Perhaps, too nearly—speak!

Ing. The army murmur,

The chiefs cabal.

Lady C. Richard!

Cro. If you will hear,

It must be patiently and fearlessly.

I expected this. To you, dear wife, the rumour

Comes best in this plain shape. (*Crosses.*) Say all you know.

Ing. Your late refusal of their suits has stirr'd them
To mutinous words.

Cro. The suits themselves were treasonous,
Not against me alone, but all I govern,
Striving to put their will for rightfull law.

Enter THURLOE.

Thurloe, you come in season ;
Hear you of the army ?

Thu. I am glad your highness
Has heard of them from others. Fleetwood's plans
Are ripening now.

Lady C. Fleetwood's ? Our brother Fleetwood !

Cro. Patience ! your promise, or you mar our work.
Aye ! he's so near the throne, that but a step,
He thinks, will seat him there.

What would they now ?

Thu. Finding your acts supported by the Commons,
They threaten them.

Cro. Let England judge between them
And its elected servants.
If all are true to me—who should be true
For their own sakes, not mine—this faction's quelled
As it comes forth to light.

Lady C. Should be so quell'd,
That of its Hydra heads, not one remain
To guide their master to another treason.

Cro. You speak, wife, in the cruelty of fear ;
He, who has right and power is above wrath—
I am their master, and the people's minister,
And not a brawler for the prize of reigning.
Justice itself, done in the thirst of blood,
Is but a murder.

Lady C. I was wrong.

Cro. A moment—

A moment w^ong. It is your privilege
To speak great words—which, if they come to acts,
Yourselves would first exclaim at what you had urg'd.

Enter DEAGLE.

Dea. May it please your highness,
Lord Disbrowe, with some officers, requests
A conference with your highness.
Cro. I'll receive them.

[*Exit DEAGLE.*

So! they are come!

Lady C. Disbrowe! our uncle Disbrowe!
They cannot mean us ill, as you suppose.
Or he is here to proffer service?

Cro. He!
You surely know him better.

Lady C. We're environ'd
By traitors, then, and know not whom to trust;
But you are calm—you smile still.

Cro. If we be,
I can't afford to fear.

Lady C. I'll leave you—smiles,
As you have said, and now I see, may be
More wearisome to wear than frowns.

[*Exit.*

Cro. My uncle!
The veriest clown that ever was styled a lord,
Lambert, and Fleetwood drive the battering ram
Against my power; Disbrowe's its wooden head,
That swings on senselessly, strike what it may,
Is of no nature to feel hurt itself.

*Enter DISBROWE, attended by BERRY, DARNEL, and other
OFFICERS.*

Good Morrow. Since you come with such a train,

I speak, as I suppose, to my Lord Disbrowe,
Rather than my good uncle. Welcome, gentlemen.

[*Seats himself, and puts on his hat.*

I wait you.

Dis. You shall hear, my lord. Your highness
Knows that I neither make nor love long speeches.
It is the army's wish that you dissolve
The Parliament.

Cro. Indeed!

Dis. (*After a pause.*) No other answer?

Cro. As you, I neither make nor love long speeches.

Dis. We come here for the soldiers' liberties—
We've fought and bled to raise the Commonwealth,
And will not suffer coward lawyers rein us
With our own power.

Cro. You'd rule the Commonwealth?

Dis. We'd rule ourselves.

Cro. Can you?

Dis. Aye, though you sheer,
We will. We look to elect our General,
And you refuse it; we demand a trial
Of every soldier by court-martial only,
And you refuse that—that the war council
Alone shall cashier officers, denied
By you, and that with reprimand. The Commons
Abet you in your plans against the army;
Try to dissolve our councils, voting them
Illegal, and demand an oath that we
Shall leave them undisturbed, in their own functions—
'Tis either they or we—and we've the sword
That won them leave to sit, and claim such power,
We'll use it for our own.

Cro. Against your country
You speak out plainly—so I answer. I
Am by the law your General—will hold
The office to prevent the wrongs you aim at,

Striving to elect another; every officer
Shall, as he ought, obey the nation's chief—
Or, at his will, shall be cashier'd. The soldier
Shall answer to the laws as other men,
As by the laws he is protected like them;
This have I said, and this not to maintain
Were to cast down the power which the three realms
Have with a free assent plac'd in my hands.

Dis. I say—

Cro. Pray speak, sir, when I ask it of you.
I am yet what they've confirmed me. What's the soldier
But as I am, the servant of his country,
Most honor'd when he executes its laws?
A soldier's noblest name is a true citizen.
Robbers, indeed, fight for the spoil they snatch,
And quarrel for it after. Choose you which
You please to call yourselves?

Dis. We have the power,
And I would drag you from the chair you sit in,
And end your reign thus, if you should refuse
Still to grant what we claim.

Cro. (Starting up.) Thou drag me hence!
Traitor! But stir!—I have my own good arm
To avenge that insult. And there may be here
In your own company some who have not
Forgotten every oath, and the respect
Men owe themselves;
Or, if I stand alone, let me but see thee
Advance one foot, thou traitor, if thou dar'st.

[INGOLDSBY and THURLOE have advanced to support
RICHARD CROMWELL—BERRY and the other OFFI-
CERS interpose.

Ber. My lord!

Officer. Lord Disbrowe!

Dar. Pray, your highness—

Cro. (*Seeing INGOLDSBY and THURLOE.*) Ah !
Here are two—I had forgotten—here's Dick Ingoldsby,
Who, tho' he cannot cant and fawn, pray heaven
To win respect from men, I dare call honest,
And trust him with my life, though 'twere assail'd
By more and braver than I see around me.

Thur. Your highness——

Cro. Thank you, Thurloe; you remind me
Of what I am. Aught else ?

Dis. You have heard all—
I do not seek to anger you. We claim
What at the first, or last, we shall enforce.

Cro. "We!" Dost thou know what part of that great
"We!"
Thou art, man!—just the hound that's leash'd, or loos'd—
Halloo'd on, or re-call'd—caress'd or lash'd
To do their work, or sport, who set him on,
And when the game's run down, driven back to kennel
To his dog's-mess.

Dis. I am no toothless hound.

Cro. No; when thou art they'll hang thee. Do'st thou think
Fleetwood or Lambert, when they speak of thee,
Say "We!"? I'll teach thee—each says "I" alone;
Fleetwood says, "I would be Lord General,
"That I may after be the Lord Protector."
Lambert says, "Fleetwood shall be General;
"That in his name the foul work may be done,
"Is needful to make me the Lord Protector."
In serving Fleetwood, thou art but a tool's tool—
Fleetwood's but Lambert's huntsman, Uncle Disbrowe,
And thou art still the hound.

Dis. Had your own father—

Cro. I speak thee kindly man. I do not chide thee
As, being thy Lord and Leader, I should chide.
If to my father, brother of thy wife,
Thou had'st spoken what thou hast said to me, thou knowest

Ere this thy tongue had ceased to wag at all,
I'd stay thee as a wayward, foolish hind,
That digs a trench beneath a toppling wall,
Or as a child that plays with fire and powder.
The evil that thou do'st be sure thou'll share ;
Although thou shut'st thine eyes, and think'st thou'ret safe,
Mark me—thou'll rue this day ! I tell it thee
In very pity.

Dis. And I thank your highness
As your counsel merits ; meanwhile let it serve
Yourself rather than me. Dissolve this Parliament !
Let that return your father's power displac'd,
Against all right. The army will make terms
For you and your authority. Refuse us,
I tell you once again—

Thu. His highness needs not
To hear irreverence twice.

Cro. Let him speak on !
Thu. 'Twere fitter in an honest loyal man
Not to say kinsman.

Cro. Thurloe ! by your life,
Your duty—love to me—no pleading to him.
Let him bear my answer back.

Thu. So let it be ;
Yet, such an answer as may well befit
Your highness to return to men who cannot
All speak by such a tongue, as we have heard.
This man's intemperance should not move your wrath
Against true subjects.

Cro. Ah, you're right again.
Dis. If you believe I speak not in the voice
Of the whole army, when I may return
To have this formal answer, I will bring
Proof of my mission—you shall hear and see,
And feel I speak their will.

Cro. Bring me that proof

Themselves, and let them, if their will be so—
But, no! I'll not disgrace them with the thought—
I'll wait you here to-morrow; here we stay
All leave-taking.

[*Exeunt* DISBROWE, OFFICERS, &c.

(*To THURLOE.*) Do you think that I'll forgive you
Checking me twice to make me feel my folly ?
My good friend—and you, Ingoldsby, go forth.
You to the army!—find what strength is there
On which we may rely. You to the Commons !
(*To THURLOE.*) If they be true to me as I am firm
For them, and for the rights they've trusted to me,
I'll plant my peaceful standard in their House,
And let the army seek and slay us there,
Ere I will yield. Away, we'll not disgrace
The right by sloth or doubt. Speed, my good friends !

[*Exeunt.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—LADY DOROTHY CROMWELL's *Apartment in Whitehall.*

LADY C. *discovered, pacing the room with disordered steps—PATIENCE attending.*

Lady C. (*Stopping.*) Your fellow servants, then, say nothing?

Pat. No, madam,

But they look sorrowful.

Lady C. You questioned them?

Pat. I did not think that right, madam.

Lady C. You should:

Some one should speak right out—right out at once,
And tell me what to fear. (*Paces on, then stops again.*) The Lord Protector,
Before he went—(*Goes on, and stops again.*) The Secretary Thurloe

Came to him—did you say so?—and went forth
Again. And Colonel Ingoldsby?

Pat. They did, madam,
As Robert told me.

Lady C. (*Going on, and to herself.*) And he would not speak
To me;—he meant to spare me; and to know that,
Is to feel all that he would spare me—more,
Let me hope more. I could not—I'd not wish
To live, if—

Pat. Would you see your children, madam?

Lady C. No! (*Paces on.*) They would look up in my face,
and wonder,
And question me. Why should you think I'd see them?



Cro. Right honest, faithful.—Is Lord Ingoldsby
Return'd?
Dea. Not yet, my lord.
Cro. Nor master Secretary?
Dea. No, my lord.
Cro. Time! Time!—leave me. Bring either to me,
The moment he arrives. [Exit DRAGLE.
Would both were here!
Lady C. You have heard no evil tidings?
Cro. None.
Lady C. Our kinsmen?
Cro. You see our brother Falconberg is true.
Lady C. I knew it. You have been with other friends?
Cro. They should come to me.
Lady C. But now—
Cro. Who would cast off
The shew of duty now casts off the intent:
The cause is theirs I strive for; if they prize it,
Let their deeds speak with mine.
Lady C. Aye, deeds! All's sure
If you speak so. You'll do whate'er you speak;
You said so, and—I know it. You'll not suffer
Disbrowe to drag you from your chair.
Cro. I pray you
Be silent—
There are words that stick and fester in the heart—
No wonder if they madden! I'd be sure
And strong enough to pardon, for I hate him.
Lady C. Your hate's his due! They trust to your forbear-
ance,
Not their own strength. But there are others, Richard,
Look to you to be generous and brave
For them—for such as love you—as you love.
Richard, I could not look upon my children
Just now! but now, reading your looks aright,
I'd hold their hands, and watch the strife may come,

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Cro. The trumpet call—

Lady C. Aye, and the tramp of horse—nearer and nearer—
They will seize upon us here!

Cro. They are marching hither.
Come they as friends, or foes, they are no more
Than we're prepar'd to front.

Ing. Shall we not meet them?

Cro. I would hear what the Commons have resolv'd;
Then march the faithful regiments to their guard,
And send the order thence to cashier all
That disobey the law, or dare to threaten
The rightful powers that make it, and should wield it.

Enter DEAGLE.

Dea. Lord Disbrowe, and the officers, await
Your highness' pleasure. Many
Throng round the doors, their regiments line the streets.

Cro. The better. We shall have the soldiery
At hand. Now bless thee wife, I will through them all
Myself to the Commons.

Dea. Might I beg your highness
One moment. There's a man, a Captain Darnel,
Who bade me crave your highness' ear for him
Before you meet the officers; as he said,
For your own sake.

Ing. I would reject no service.

Cro. Quick then, one word with him, no more.

[*Exit DEAGLE.*

And then

We'll face these traitors. The chosen of a realm
May fall a martyr, as he'd live a victor,
And with as proud a joy.

Enter DARNEL.

Oh you would speak with me!

Be brief.

Dar. Alone to your highness.

Cro. Give us leave. [All retire.

Dar. First pardon, and your promise that my words
Shall never harm me with your enemies.

Cro. You have both.

Dar. You would be free'd from those who oppose you?

Cro. Freed!

Dar. Freed.

Cro. Speak on!

Dar. Give but your word that those
Who do you this good office shall succeed
To those whom they remove, ere night you have not
One enemy of power throughout the camp.

Cro. And how?

Dar. Our means are taken surely, silently.

We know your active foes; one of ourselves
Stands at the side of each. Speak, and 'tis done.

Cro. Leave me!

Dar. My lord—

Cro. Leave me—you have my pardon;

It may be you have serv'd me. I am calm!
I'll keep the silence I have promised you—
You have my pardon, go.

Dar. Henceforth my sword
Is theirs who do not fear to use it.

[Exit DARNEL.]

Friends,

Shall we on? I am prouder than I was,
Perhaps with no ignoble reason. Come!

Enter DEAGLE.

Dea. My lord, I dare your highness' great displeasure,
Lest I should scant my duty. The lord Disbrowe
Demands to see your highness instantly.

Cro. Demands!

Dea. I had not ventur'd to speak thus,

But that his soldiers wait upon his will.

Cro. I am not wrath with thee, thou dost good service.
Demands!—’Death! will he not let me overlook him
As I was fain to do? But now I scorn him,
And can say to him, bear my message rightly
And swiftly too, or I may supersede it.
I’ll answer his demand.

[*Exit* DEAGLE.]

Disbrowe! whom I,
Had I but said one word, but look’d “a yes,”
Could have doom’d as certainly.—We will not wait,
As if to assume contempt; I can despise him
Enough without that. Farewell, wife!—no words!
What you shall hear or see of me I know not!
But this, I’ll meet you with as clear a brow
As that with which I leave you. On, my friends.

Exeunt all but LADY C.

Lady C. Is he too deeply stung? I know he feels
More than he speaks. Richard! yet he will do
Bravest when most he feels. And for a kingdom!
Hold there my heart, for thinking of our state
There is no danger but what perils that
There cannot be a coward on a throne
Such as are meaner men. His destiny
Is not the tombstone tale of life and death!
Power and glory are his years. Live, Richard,
The only life thou should’st, a sovereign still!

[*Exit*.]

SCENE II.—*The Banqueting Room at Whitehall—Dis-*
BROWE, BERRY, DARNEI, and many OFFICERS on one side—
FALCONBERG and DEAGLE, apart.

Dis. Lambert and Fleetwood were with Lenthal?

Ber.

Aye,

He had consented to resume the Speakership—
Had summon'd all the members of that Parliament
Which Oliver dissolv'd at the sword's point.

Dis. We have no more to do there than make way for
them;
If Oliver by force might drive them out,
We, the force being ours, may re-instate them.

[*Turning to the Protector's party.*

Does his highness think his army holiday courtiers,
Or lacqueys waiting for a piece of coin,
That he slight us thus with his delay?

Fal.

His highness—

Dea. Answer him not, my lord. Pray you a moment.

[*They talk apart.*

D.s. (To BERRY.) Lay the commission to dissolve the Par-
liament

There, ready for his signature.

Dea. (Aside to FALCONBERG.) Good speed!

[*Exit FALCONBERG.*

Dis. Ha! put yourself at the head of your own regiment,
For Falconberg has left the room in haste.
He'll lead his men, if it should come to blows.

[*Exit BERRY.*

SECOND ATTENDANT enters, and announces the LORD PROTEC-
TOR — RICHARD CROMWELL and INGOLDSBY enter with
attendants — RICHARD CROMWELL bows slightly — DISBROWE
comes before him.

Dis.

We have waited, sir,

For our dispatch, rather to serve your highness
Than for our own need.

[RICHARD CROMWELL passes him — surveys the OFFICERS
attentively, then goes to a window — a cheer is heard
from without.

Dar. (*To Disbrowe from another window.*) 'Tis from Fal-
conberg's regiment!

Berry is there—the other men are silent.

[RICHARD CROMWELL seats himself, and takes up the
paper which had been placed on the table.

Dis. He hardly changes colour, yet I think
It angers him.

Dar. I thought he would have torn it.

Cro. (*To his own Attendants and Party.*) Who plac'd this
paper here?

Dis. (*After a pause.*) 'Twas by my order.

Cro. (*Not regarding him.*) Which of my council has
provided this?

Dis. It is the army's claim.

Cro. (*As before.*) Has any one
Made himself Chancellor as well as General,
Each by his own appointment?

Dis. Sign that paper!
You'd not believe I spoke the army's will?
I have brought proof—the leaders are around you,
The soldiery you have beheld in the street.
In their name I require you now to sign it,
And say for them, who are here to make it good,
If you refuse us we disclaim your power,
And cast off all allegiance to your person.

Cro. I arrest thee of high treason. He who would shew
He does not share the crime, and would not share
The penalty, stand from him. In your body,
I know it, I have friends—let no one strike,
But each one who is brave enough to own,
Among dishonour'd men, he values honor,
Come hither to my side, and share a victory
Bloodless, as brave and honest.

Dar. They're appall'd.

Ing. Each fears his fellow.

Dar. To the soldiery. [Exit.

Dis. What ! are ye ten to one, and can a word,
The name of treason start you ? did you bid me
Declare your will, and yet you dare not now
Second me with a deed that is as easy
As but to will it.

[*Shouts without*—“ Lord Disbrowe ! Give us our leader
Disbrowe !”]

Ber. (Without.) The Protector
Shall answer with his life for Disbrowe's safety.

[*Another cheer—INGOLDSBY advances on DISBROWE.*

Ing. We have friends !—your sword !
Deliver up your sword !

Dis. Come on, and take it !

Cro. Hold ! I command you, friends and foes !
To the Commons !

There will I plant the standard of the people !
Front me there, sirs—lay parricidal hands
There if you can upon your country's freedom.
Let Eng' and witness one indignity
Done to its peaceful servants in their House,
If the old heart beat yet within its body
'Twill rise, and with one blow assert and end.
On !

Dis. Stay !

Cro. For thee !—back slave ! self-selling slave !
Folly and shame of treason ! On !

Enter THURLOE and FALCONBERG.

Thu. My lord !
I would crave your ear a moment.

Cro. From the Commons ?

Thu. Aye, my good lord !

Cro. Speak on, and speak aloud—
Their words are now my deeds, and let all know them.
What say they ?

Thu. My good lord—

Cro. Speak all at once.

Thu. Hearing the army's threats, they adjourn'd to wait
Apart the dissolution they might fear,
Without the insult that might come with it.

Cro. They might fear ? and at my hands !—did you not tell
them—

Are we not here in arms for them alone ?
Cowards ! they have betrayed the noblest cause—
One of the few that do not shame the sword !
Left me ! that's nothing ! as all men are left
Who stand in the gap of peril for a herd
To be struck down, and trampled on, and mock'd,
Mock'd by—Ah ! dastards !

Ing. For yourself

Yield not.

Fal. We're ready yet !

Thu. Even I.

Cro. 'Tis done !
Do I not see my title is a scoff !
Do I not feel your faith all I should prize ?
'Tis nought for me to yield my despised life !
But were my state rich, as 'tis base and worthless,
I would not buy it with one true man's blood.

Dis. Your highness now perhaps may need that paper.

Cro. I do—and more, I thank you for the taunt
That shews me able to preserve my friends,
By yielding all, even to the spleen I feel
Bending to one I most of all despise.
Give me the pen. (THURLOE does so.)

Cro. (Signs.) 'Tis done.

(Giving the commission to DISBROWE.) Take, sir, your act.
Aye, look !—'tis fairly sign'd; for my share in it
Is a reprieve to all the innocent lives
Your bandit swords had doom'd to butchery.

The child—

The trembling woman, and the aged man,

Whose bloody spectres shall not gast me here,
Or bar me in the hereafter. From your murders
I save them. Take this, for no other hand
Is fit to finish what you have begun.

Enter DARNE.

Dar. Fleetwood and Lambert are escorting Lenthal,
With such of the old Parliament, displaced
By Oliver, as they can bring together
To the Commons' house. . .

Cro. Falconberg! meet them there.
Since England's sword of justice is a weapon
Each ruffian may snatch up for ruffian acts,
I will not bear it more. Say this to them—
By whatever deed they choose, I will confirm it.
I resign my state, cast down my insulted rule,
Despised by me more than by its betrayers.

Thu. My lord, this anarchy—

Cro. Will quickly end,
For these blind seekers of the army's rights.
That man, who envies every power above him,
And would pull down all because he cannot rise,
Have by their deed this day cashier'd themselves,
And made a king—aye, made Charles Stuart King.

Dis. Treason to England!

Cro. Are not thy lips pale
To repeat that word? I tell thee what thou hast done,
And thou thyself cry'st "Treason!" The event
Shall be your foe—I am content to wait it;
'Twill save the land from you. I have done—no more.

Dis. Farewell to your highness.

[*Exit DISBROWE and OFFICERS.*

Cro. Farewell to that name, indeed. I am now no more

Than Richard Cromwell, and as poor a man
As my enemies can wish me.

Ing. Do not shame your friends—
Our faith is firm. Share—nay, take all is ours.

Fal. and Thu. All! all!

Cro. 'Tis I who am sham'd that you should think
I meant to complain or beg. I'll find content
Yet. Pray you speed on that my last employ
Of state—Farewell. (*They kneel.*) No homage now; your
hands.

Let it be somewhat that a prince dethron'd,
Can claim the friendly grasp of three just men
Who have been so near to him. To that last office!
And then, if you return, as equals should,
Why, I will greet and thank you as a man
Should thank the fast friends of his changed estate.
Pray you no more words now—farewell.

[*Exeunt all but CROMWELL.*

Alone!
Thank heaven! alone!—I am a stranger now
Where I have reign'd.—Mute walls be silent still,
Nor echo back my stealthy tread to start me
Where I have pac'd a monarch! Am I yet
The same thing that I was?—The blow is struck—
The pain will come anon—Patience to bear it!
Ah! I shall need it now.

Enter LADY CROMWELL.

Lady C. They're gone. You've conquer'd,
Richard! you've conquer'd them—you could'n't look
So placid if you had not.

Cro. There's a conquest
Makes us more placid than the one we win

Over our enemies.

Lady C. No, beseech you Richard,
Don't make me think you're vanquish'd ?—if you are,
You could not be so cruel, but you'd feel
As I must feel.

Cro. Wife, wife, a throne has sunk
Beneath my feet !—think then what I must feel ! .
But there's a raft to make out of the wreck,
And our security must be endurance—
Aye, our endurance—yours with mine. I ask it
Now in my need—ask it of you, my wife.

Lady C. Even of poor content, we—we who have reign'd,
Have not the humblest means—we are beset.
I have seen it even now, with creditors
That only wait your fall to put on you
The base indignities that helpless poverty
Must bear—and our poor children, whom I hop'd !—
Let me not think of hopes that I have cherished—
Let me not think of anything that bless'd me—
All that I treasur'd is engulph'd, and life
Must follow next.

Cro. Yes, look upon the past,
Not upon this wild dream of royalty !
But the better, happier past, that once we had,
Whose joys shall come back to us.

Lady C. Better ! happier !
Look there ! the last who was depos'd pass'd there
To death—the place has terrors written on it,
To calm which, words are vain. His spirit haunts it
To mark our fate to us.

Cro. He could but witness
The purity of conscience which is ready
To meet that threatened fate. This place of terrors
Is ours no more—its memories pass with it !
Oh ! if I may for you, and for our children,
Enjoy a life secure ! But I must have at home

The cheer to bear me onward, and from you—
Refuse it if you can, and be a foe
More deadly than my worst. We have nothing left
But love and fortitude, and mutual help—
We will cling fast to them. Ay, lay your head
Upon my heart, so both shall find their rest.

Lady C. I have not the hope
To say "heaven help us!" I will strive—I'll strive!

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in an obscure lodging.*

LADY DOROTHY CROMWELL *discovered looking from a window*
—PATIENCE *on the left.*

Lady C. He turns the corner now! At last, he runs!
To the door! quick!

[Exit PATIENCE.]

He must not knock, or wait.
Pass but to-day—only to-day! Yet, why?
Each morrow brings new cruelties—new terrors!
But let me spare him this, the only blow
The sternest manhood would not shame to feel.

Re-enter PATIENCE with ROBERT DEAGLE.

Speak quickly, Robert—I must stay by your lord,
Lest he should leave the house.

Dea. Not for Heaven's sake now, madam,
Nor for half an hour to come; almost by this time
They must be setting forth—at the street's end
He'd meet them.

Lady C. Keep watch here still—
I have little now to give you but my thanks;
But you have chosen that payment for your service,
And kindly do you earn it—watch for me still.

[Exit into chamber.]

Pat. What is it that so frights you?

Dea. They have, good faith—it makes me choke to tell it—

Dug up the poor bones of his father, Oliver,
That rested yonder in the abbey—now
They're forming a procession, that they may draw them
To Tyburn, where upon the common gallows
They mean to hang them.

Pat. So, many of his old friends have been taken
And executed; when I think of them,
It makes me weep for him.

Dea. Let us hope better.

Pat. Since, now the King's return'd, and all seems settled,
Why don't he leave the kingdom?

Dea. Money, wench!
His wife and children too; and they examine
The vessels. Should they detain him but a day,
And his creditors learn it, he might be their prisoner
For life, as well as the King's.

[*Knocking at the door.*]

(*Looking down from the window.*) There are Disbrowe, Berry,
And another, at the door.
The knaves and fools! Since the Restoration
All has happened to them as he said 'twould happen;
They made a rod for their own backs, and want him
To ease the smart.

[*Knock at the door.*]

Aye, aye! my masters, wait—
You wouldn't wait when he was Lord Protector,
And so you must wait now He will not see them,
And if his creditors should dog them hither,
And know who livet here, we shall have a siege
Of every rogue that ever serv'd a writ,
Commanded by the Sheriffs of London in person.

Pat. I thought the Parliament had satisfied
His creditors.

Dea. Lord help your innocent soul!
Creditors are such cormorants—there's no way

To satisfy 'em, except by paying them.

Pat. And didn't they ?

Dea. Oh, no ; they thought it cheaper to make a law,

No one should trouble him about his debts,

Which law held well as long as they held well—

But when they were kick'd out, their law went with 'em.

[*Another knock.*

Pat. They're knocking still.

Dea. Let 'em ; it is a luxury

To an official person like myself—

Pleasant remembrance of old times gone by. .

[*Knock.*

Humph ! they persevere !

Enter LADY DOROTHY CROMWELL.

Lady C. Admit those brawlers, Robert—no reproof
Or slight will drive them from the door.

'Tis dangerous
For us to be noted, and these men well known
For what they have been—Go !

[*Exit DRAGLE.*

You may leave me, girl.

[*Exit PATIENCE.*

We hoped but for the safety of neglect,
An humble prayer—but vain !

Enter RICHARD CROMWELL.

Let me speak with them
But for to-day ; I'll not dismiss them harshly,
If they come in friendship—for the dangers round us
Can scorn no help now.

Cro. Dangers !

Lady C. Aye, such dangers
As we have spoken of, as you know.

Oh, Richard ! Richard !
Said I not, from the height on which we stood,
No one could fall and live.

Enter DISBROWE, BERRY, and DARNEL.

Cro. You seek me, gentlemen,
Who am most unwilling to be found of you ;
I have no more to give, that you've prevented—
You have no more to take—you've taken all.
Let it be a solace to my poverty
That it divides us ever.

Dis. We have need
Still of each other.

Ber. There's a common danger
That can be only met by well-knit strength.

Cro. There is no bond of union that can join us ;
You have my answer.

Lady C. Yet you forgive them,
Though 'tis to pardon more than I dare think,
When they come back in kindness and in duty,
Repenting what they've done against your rights,
And offering services—

Cro. Which are a snare
Worse than their former treasons. I speak plainly,
Not angrily. My heart is subdued enough
To grant forgiveness to whoe'er may ask it
Simply and truly—such as have no heart
To seek and accept it so let me forget,
For then my own is free. (*To DISBROWE.*) It is the hour
I take the exercise my spirits need ;
Since we have spoken all that we may speak,
'Tis needless that your presence should detain me.

Lady C. Richard !—one moment ! May I speak with you ?
Cro. When they will give us leave to speak alone.

Lady C. Pray you, remain.

Cro. To listen to professions
That make my flesh creep with their loathsome falsehood.
To your chamber ; I'll return when they are gone.

[*Exit.*]

Lady C. Merciful heaven ! the very hour.

Dis. He has left us.

Dar. Speak then with her.

Dis. With her ?

Dar. She had never spoken

Of forgiving us, had she not hoped a service
That should repay the past.

Dis. Ah ! I conceive you ;
It grieves me, cousin, that your husband should
Bear malice for old feuds—I was to blame,
That I confess, and frankly
I admit my faults, and would repair them.

Lady C. Sir,
Have you been abroad to-day ? Know you the sight
That he may meet, of which you are the authors ?
You betray'd the son !—to you he owes the shame
Fallen on his father's reliques ; have you power
To repair that ?

Dar. Not repair—avenge, perhaps—
Prevent more shame and wrong. It was that sight
That brought us hither, madam.

Dis. Yet, if it were but with the dead they had dealt !
Many of those we used to call our friends,
That used to sit at the same board with us—
Faces that look'd like brothers in our houses,
Have died in tortures—no part of the butchery
The law decrees being spared them.

Lady C. Man ! I know it ;
Why force upon my ears what I had plung'd
In the sea's depth to stop them to ?

Dis. Because
What they have done, shows plainly what they will do.

Dar. And will they spare the highest they may reach at ?
What sacrifice so welcome as a Cromwell ?

Lady C. It has been my hourly thought. Richard ! my
children !

[*A distant shout heard.*

That peal! it must reach him! the howl of fiends
Screaming around their prey!

Dis. Nay, do not listen!

Lady C. I know that it is there—that he must hear it.
You, and his ancient friends, have done this.

Dis. All is not lost yet! They have banished
Every disbanded soldier twenty miles
From London—every disaffected person—
A name that's easily given to any one,
When those who call names choose to think him so—
Under like penalties must not abide
So near the capital.

Dar. There is our hope—
If all will see their danger, there's the means
To avert it.

Lady C. Ha! they have cast aside the weapon
Another might take up.

Dar. If but his highness—
My tongue's accustom'd to the word—

Lady C. My husband?

Dis. If he would lead, and save us with himself—

[*A knock.*]

Lady C. (She goes to the window.) Ah! he's return'd!—I
pray you, gentlemen—
He leans against the door-post—gasp for breath—
I pray you, in yon chamber—do not meet him
Yet; I will speak with you; will call you forth
If he can bear. (They go.) I thank you heartily.

[*Exeunt DISBROWE, DARNEL, and BERRY.*]

Mercy of heaven! this hath stricken him,
That he staggers at the blow; they have spoken truly,
The terrible omen reaches him. Dear husband!

[*Meeting RICHARD CROMWELL as he enters.*]

Cro. Ah, they are gone!—thank heaven!

Lady C. (Pacing chair.) Here! rest here!



Lady C. You did not see—

Cro. See! no—I think that could not be. I loved him,
Though our natures differ'd—honor'd, boasted of him—
Though I could not command all; rever'd at least
In all the piety of filial love—
Do you think that I could see? The thought's more horrible
Than all has gone before it.

Lady C. Wretched vengeance!

Cro. Had it been
Charles Stuart's act, I could have pitied him
For the pain of wrath that urg'd it; but it is
The cold, deliberate decree of men
Who sell their passions to the time will buy them.

Lady C. And where may light the next blow of these
cowards?

We have not talked of this—would not believe
What was around us—shut our eyes to find
Security. You, living, are as helpless
Now, as they think, as he they spurn as dead;
You're the next trophy they will rear to loyalty.
What! have our streets been spectacles of anguish,
Torture, and shame, on all that we have lov'd!
And you, who have been, nay are, the highest yet
Of all their opposites, do you not feel
You must fear, or be feared?

Cro. For myself, nothing
I fear now—

And in that mood am fit to make all danger
Present at once—strive with it to the death.
Wife! I saw one who has betray'd to me
Many, although I never harm'd them, watching
Near my own door. Willis!—Sir Richard Willis!
Perchance, I'll not return; we can send notice
To Robert, and to Patience for the children.
If they should join us, meet me in half an hour,
By our old favorite tree in the park—the time

Is right for what I seek ; and ere you see me,
I will know something more of fate to come,
Or pay the penalty it asks of me.

Be cheerful ! What I'd do is a wise rashness.

Bless you !—farewell !

[*Exit.*]

Lady C. In half an hour !—the place ?
Would he strike some blow, sudden as terrible ?
He is arous'd—he hath the glance of purpose,
Which in him speaks a deed. Heavens ! should he perish,
What then were we ? Ah, self ! what should we be
Without him ? Nothing ! what else would I be ?

Re-enter (looking in previously) DISBROWE, DARNEL, and BERRY.

Ah, I had almost forgotten !

Dis. Yet, our aid
Might be more welcome now to him, as useful
To the deed that he proposes.

Lady C. How ? What deed ?
Dis. That must the time tell—but the nature of it
Is not so hard to guess. Here are three swords,
And heads that have commanded many more.
We know the regiments that are not disband'd
Are those the best affected to his person.
Were he, or any well-known friend of his,
To speak one word—

Lady C. Why spoke you not to him ?
Dar. We obey'd your will.

Lady C. True ! true ! would you had met !—
But sure the time speaks loudly to me. Still
He hates, distrusts—whence should aid come to us —
Aid for our lives, but by them ? Who else are ready
To bear him on their bucklers to his throne ?

Dis. Cousin, there's little time to pause.

Lady C. His friend!
His true friend that he trusts! You shall have my word,
My written word, to Colonel Ingoldsby.
Confer with him, and bid him take what means
He should for the Lord Richard's safety; he
Shall know our imminent strait—confer with him,
And if the need should come, why, act with him,
If you will die with us for Richard's weal.

Dis. A letter!

Dar. Aye! it will suffice for us,
And for yourself, it is most wisely thought, madam.

Lady C. Without there!

Enter PATIENCE.

Bring a taper to my chamber.

[*Exit PATIENCE.*]

Wait me one moment.

[*Exit LADY CROMWEIL.*]

Dar. She is ours, and he
With her!—she fain must play the queen again;
And so she may, let but our fortunes rise
By her's.

Dis. But Ingoldsby, he's pledged to Charles,
And will advise my nephew peacefully.

Dar. His name is to the warrant that condemned
Charles Stuart's father.

Enter PATIENCE, with a light, crosses behind, and exit.

He is Richard's friend,
And will obey what he believes his will.
More, let us bind but his wife's little finger
Fast to our plot, we have Richard; he must act
With us, and by us.

Dis. Aye, one incautious word,
They'll make in him a treason. He'll fight bravely.
And he will lack no seconds, when we've shap'd

His course for him.

Dar. You would have quitted her;
Never leave a woman while she listens to you.
The letter ours, shew it to Ingoldsby,
But keep it safe—it must be our credential.

Re-enter LADY CROMWELL—gives letter to DISBROWE.

Lady C. I there commit my fate into your trust—
That's all I have to give. Richard is free—
Should peril happen to him, I myself
Will, in my son's name, baffle, or avenge it.
It is done, and if the need should come, through Ingoldsby,
You shall hear of me.

Dar. (*Looks at the letter.*) 'Tis her husband's seal,
But being her hand, we have her husband's soul.

Dis. We take our leaves to speed in your affairs.

Ber. In hope—

Dar. In surely. May we greet your highness
At Whitehall, when we next present ourselves.

[*Exeunt all but LADY CROMWELL.*

Lady C. It is done! 'tis but myself that I have pledg'd;
Let Richard hold to peace! I would win back
For him at my own peril, all our fortunes.
Why shudder, then? I am ready for the danger
My deed may challenge.
He will wait me—be his purpose
Safety by victory—let us rule or perish!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*St. James's Park.*

Enter the KING, COURTIERS, and SIR RICHARD WILLIS.

King. Some services are too well paid, Sir Richard,
By being overlooked. Some honest gentlemen

Have been suitors to me, not to forget yours—
But they remember fines, imprisonments
Of my best friends, provided by your seal.

Wil. I hope, sire,
My future life shall prove—
King. That's better, man,
And of a pleasanter fashion—I am forced
To hear so much that has been done for me ;
I am glad to find there are some services
Left for the future. Good day !

[*Exit WILLIS.*

I scarce know why I should be harsh
With that poor knave ; there have been rogues on both sides—
His only fault is that he has cheated both,
A pretension traitorous to our vanity ;
But to be free of knaves, one must be free
Of all one's kind. Good morrow, gentlemen.

[*Exsunt COURTIERS.*

There is but one left now.

RICHARD CROMWELL appears.

Odds fish ! can't I speak truth
When I intend it ?

Cro. (Kneeling.) Do I kneel to the king ?
King. Yes—but get up, man, and put on your hat,
You can't tell what it is to be pursued
With suits from place to place, till all the world
Appears of the worshipful company of beggars.
I warrant me thou hast something to ask of me ;
But for thine own sake make no show of it—
Thou'l keep me to thyself two minutes longer.

Cro. I am, indeed, a suitor to your Majesty.
King. Aye, I knew that—spare me the common form ;
You and your family have lost y'dur all,
And something more—all that you might have had,

Upholding my true cause—but then your claim
Is only that of every Englishman,
As they have told me, since my restoration.

Cro. I, and my family have lost our all,
Because we have been your greatest enemies.

King. Odds fish! that's new! none have said that before ;
I'll hear you—what do you ask ?

Cro. Nothing !

King. Nay, nay !

But that's beyond belief.

Cro. I only come
To learn all that your Majesty exacts,
And pay it.

King. Humph! your story ?

Cro. In my name

That's told—tis Richard Cromwell !

King. Richard Cromwell !
You're bold, indeed ! Cromwell ! are you the usurper
That held my crown—the son of him who slew
My father ? You are bold to cross me. Wherefore
Come you to me ?

Cro. I once implor'd my father
For your's, sire, though in vain. I crav'd his life,
Though 'twas denied to me.

King. No more of that !
Think you I love the memory of that deed,
That I have patience here again to endure
The wrongs my father suffer'd !

Cro. I do not—
Such wrongs bring me to you.

King. What wrongs ?

Cro. Ah, sire !
We have keen memories for the wrongs we suffer—
Oblivion for such as we inflict.
I do not tax you with so base a deed,
But the parasites that bow around your throne,

To the glory of your father's memory,
Have untombed my father's corse !

King. If it be so,
Mere justice ; what is done, is done
By the law, by such as have the right and power.

Cro. Sire ! those who war against the dead man's bones,
Quail'd at his living look. They are your slaves,
Offering a sacrifice to filial piety,
To make a pander of your sacred duty
And noblest love.

It is their expiation—
They are judges, lest they should be criminals,
And offer up their sickening feast to fear—
Worthy indeed of them, but foul indignity
To you, before whom they place it.

King. I forgive much,
Feeling your cause—but, peace ! if you have aught
To sue for, it were well to raise no wrath.
Remember, I'm your king, wronged by your house—
By yourself—I would be just—what would you with me ?

Cro. I come to know my fate, and to submit to it.

King. Your fate ?

Cro. Aye, sire, I rather would bear judgment
From the king, upon whose throne I've sate, than wait
The cowardly, abject, wanton tyranny
Of your flatterers, when they seek another show
Of death to satisfy the blood-loving idol
They make of loyalty. I come to hear
My doom from yourself.

King. Let your own actions guard you,
If you are free from the past.

Cro. But there are such
As frame the past, sire, to their own devices.
I do not come to you in abject terror—
I speak not for myself ;—or death, or exile,
Or close imprisonment—I am here to bear it ;
But there's a justice you will not deny

To the innocent wife, and children, who await
From day to day my fate, that they may know it,
And have their peace, though it be that of woe,
Suffer'd and past—for their sakes, I would know
The doom that is their's through me.

King. Humph! you are proud,
But you have been—you pleaded for my father.
You might have spoken in a gentler strain,
But you have said some truth.

With the same honesty
Answer my question. I require of you
No hateful, no unmanly services;
There are enough who seek them, but your person
May be the centre of my enemies' plots.
Have I your free allegiance, such as subject
Should render to his king? Have I your honor,
Such as a man should give his fellow man,
For faith to me?

Cro. I pledge them, sire.

King. You shall not
Be the victim that you dread. They shall not ask it;
Or if they do, it sha'n't be in my power
To yield it—is that safety? I will give you,
Under my hand, remission for all past,
And a free passport that none question you.

We're friends
For the future. Well! you're satisfied?—we're friends

Cro. May I not disgrace the title?

King. I must write
This passport—come with me.
Cro. Sire, I would shun
All observation, which to me is danger,
If in the passport that your Majesty grants me
You would call me by some other name than Cromwell—
King. Say the half—Master Crumb—being but a fragment
Of what you were—or, if that be too near,

You shall be—Master Clarke.

Cro. I thank your Majesty.

King. Walk with me, by me, so that we're not noted—
For when I strive to do an honest act,
I'm sure of interruption if they find me.
What! I have heard of you more kindly things
You have not urged to me.

Cro. They're better urg'd
In your Majesty's remembrance.
King. Master Clarke!
Don't play the courtier—we are friends—walk with me.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter DARNEL, followed by WILLIS.

Wil. Stay, sir—a word!

Dar. With me?

Wil. With you? I have seen you
Haunting the house where Richard Cromwell lives,
In company with men whose aims I have trac'd.

Dar. Indeed. (*Draws his sword.*) Draw! draw, sir! if
you'd have a chance
For life.

Wil. I do not draw; so, should you slay me,
Men may see it is a murder. 'Twould be dangerous
To strike me here in the precincts of the ~~the~~ place,
And there are eyes upon us.

Dar. Humph!

Wil. Think coolly—
You're a disbandied officer, I denounce you
To the next guard we meet; and I disclose
The reason of your staying here in London
Against the order, where's your chance of life?

Dar. You seem to calculate with accuracy.
Why do you seek me?

Wil. For our mutual service.

You see I can be your foe—I want your help,
And will show you how to gain by helping me.
I think we might act together.

Dar. Perhaps we might, sir.
Let's hear the scheme.

Wil. If we could trace a plot
Home to this Cromwell, it might serve you better
Than aiding it, and far more safely.

Dar. Aye!
There is some one coming—let us walk.

Wil. By the streets!

Dar. You fear my rashness—nay, well! by the streets.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter RICHARD CROMWELL, with two papers.

Cro. Is she not here? no matter—all is well,
I can return now to my home!—ah! there!
Leaning so sadly! but no marvel! Wife!
She sees me!

[*Meets LADY CROMWELL as she enters.*

Love! all's saved, indeed.
You'll praise me
As you have promis'd. I have seen the king.
Here is oblivion for the past, and here
A paper styling me ~~his~~ friend, that none
May trouble us with question, or refuse us
Aid, as they love him.

Lady C. Richard!

Cro. Why so pale?

Lady C. If Disbrowe?—Darnel—

Cro. What of them? they are nothing
To us now—we'll forget they ever were;
Flee from this place of strife, of turmoil, terror—
Flee even from ourselves in everything
That has been wretched—even from the name
That mark'd us miserably great; yon bird,

That soars up in the air shall not be freer
Of the earth he leaves, than we of all that's past.

Lady C. Yes, yes—that's well—we'll hide ourselves where
none

Can know, or trace us.

Cro. Aye, where none but those
We love can find us—where, with our young playmates,
We will build up fresh peaceful innocent hopes.
No more of Richard Cromwell!—see, the king
Has given me a new name, see—“Master Clarke.”
A title, wife, such as he ne'er bestow'd
Before—a title to be happy. Aye!
To save us, wife! Dear wife! my foolish joy
Oppresses you. Come! homeward, Mistress Clarke!

[*Exeunt.*..

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The exterior of a cottage, extending up right side of stage—A garden surrounding it—A small town in the half distance—SIR JACOB and LADY CHUBB following ROBERT DEAGLE through gate.*

Chu. A pleasant house you've taken, friend?

Dea. Humph!

Chu. That is, if you have taken it.

Dea. Aye!

Lady Ch. Pooh! pooh! I'm sure I saw some better dressed folks about—you are the servant, an't you?

Dea. Well, suppose I am?

Lady Ch. What is your master's name?

Dea. Clarke.

[Exit into house.

Lady Ch. Clarke!

Chu. No great information in that; I wish I could see the people themselves.

Lady Ch. It would almost provoke one to go and knock at the door.

Chu. Patience, dear! there's nothing like beginning an acquaintance accidentally, if one can but contrive it. One can see what people are; if one's likely to be the better for them, it is very easy to get intimate; if they are likely to want anything of us, why, we can drop 'em at once.

Lady Ch. It's very true, my dear Jacob.

Chu. "Sir!"—surely "Sir Jacob," from a wife to a husband, Lady Chubb—we may as well enjoy the title still between

ourselves. The king himself is at the hall yonder—a miraculous chance for making one's court, if one had but any pretence for it. The times are changeable—one might do his Majesty a service by keeping one's eyes open.

[DARNEL's head appears above the hedge.

That's the second time that fellow has popped his grim-looking face over.

Lady Ch. A most ill-bred curiosity; if he wants anybody, why don't he walk in?

[DARNEL appears at the gate.

Chu. He's coming! we may get something out of him!

Enter DARNEL—He keeps near the gate, watching the house, so as not to be seen from it—DARNEL and SIR JACOB bow.

Dar. I beg pardon; but this pretty rural garden—have I the honor to address the owner—that is, the occupier—the present occupier?

Chu. No, sir; only an acquaintance—a casual acquaintance. (*Aside to LADY CH.*) Can't say less, you know, being in the man's own garden, whoever he is.

Lady Ch. No; get him to go and knock.

Chu. Of course, sir, you have business with the occupier?

Lady Ch. Don't let us prevent you.

Chu. We should never think of forcing ourselves into a party.

Dar. My dear sir—on the contrary, you couldn't oblige me more than by taking precedence, I trust, when gallantry is in the question, and to a person of quality.

[Bows to LADY CHUBB.

Lady Ch. If he's not excessively handsome, he's very genteel.

Dar. Besides, this is such a charming spot, I could linger here for hours.

[ROBERT DEAGLE appears at the door.

Dar. All's right!

[Exit hastily, through gate.

Lady Ch. Dear me!

Chu. "All's right!" Then there's something wrong! I shall sift this person.

Dea. These suspicious people lurking about here still! I suppose they are the ones that Patience meant; I must affront them if I can—the best way to prevent other people from being disagreeable, is to be disagreeable one's self.

Chu. You've not been long here, friend? I say, friend, you've not been long here?

Dea. I've nothing to say to the contrary.

Chu. Ah! I knew that.

Dea. Then why did you ask?

Lady Ch. Friend! this gentleman, who has been knighted in his time, condescended to converse with you—he doesn't seem astonished.

Chu. Cool and harden'd! My friend, I have the honor also to be an alderman of Quidlingboro'—past the chair—a magistrate.

Dea. Well?

Lady Ch. The audacity!—fellow, have you been in the habit of seeing such people before?

Dea. Not more than once or twice, I believe.

Lady Ch. I should have thought so.

Chu. Perhaps, you are not aware that I consider any persons coming here in an abrupt manner, without "with your leave, or by your leave"—not known to anybody—rather a suspicious appearance.

Dea. I was just thinking so.

Chu. Aha! then, in plain terms, my friend, I should like to have a sight of your master.

Dea. That's easily done, sir; he's at your elbow.

[RICHARD and LADY CROMWELL have entered from the house.

Dea. This gentleman, sir, a beknighted alderman, desires to see you; he said he suspected something, and—

Chu. No, my friend, no, you're mistaken—the master doesn't look as if one could browbeat him.

Crō. Leave us, Robert.

[*Exit ROBERT, at gate.*

Lady Ch. How respectfully he goes—I should like to teach
our town beadle—

Crō. I thought some friends might take an interest—

Chu. Yes, as you say, an interest—

Crō. Sir!

Chu. I beg pardon—

He wont be interrupted.

Crō. Take an interest
In a new comer; therefore, I'm provided
With an authentic answer to inquiries.

I shall produce it, when I know who makes them—
Your name, title, and office?

Chu. He examines me!—

Chubb! alderman! Sir Jacob! that is, Chubb, Esq.,
According to—who asks me?—

Crō. I remember
A most staunch friend of the Protectorate,
Knighted by Oliver Cromwell.

Chu. Yes, I had
That honor—or misfortune.

Crō. The first name
In an address from Quidlingboro' to Richard—

Chu. I had the happiness—or misery—
Or something, to be mayor.

Lady Ch. How should he know
So much about you?—ask him.

Chu. I don't like.
Perhaps he has come down here with a commission.
I wish I had kept my nose out of this place.

Crō. You've satisfied me—I'll return the compliment.
You've seen the royal signature?

Chu. I've studied it
With reverence ever since I saw it written

In a reply to the town council.

Cro. Look

On this—nay, read it through.

Chu. "His Majesty's friend!"

His good friend "Master Clarke!"—aid and assistance
"To all magistrates." I'm a magistrate—never so proud
Before of being a magistrate. Why, his Majesty—
Your friend, his Majesty, is on a visit
Here at the hall, two miles off—you may see it.
Perhaps you'll meet him there. Any aid in my power.

[*LADY CHUBB goes very obsequiously to LADY CROMWELL.*

Good Master Clarke—oh dear!

Cro. What ails you, sir?

Chu. I thought how strange that you should be content
To remain plain Master Clarke, being the friend
Of his most gracious Majesty—now knighthood—

Cro. Ah, true—you've lost it. All don't know what 'tis
To have been great, and then to fall from honor.

Chu. No, you can guess our feelings.

Cro. Pretty well.

Lady Ch. One misses it, when one's used to it, like flannel.

Lady C. (*With meaning, to CROMWELL.*) I confess I never
saw the worth of honor so plainly before.

Lady Ch. How should you, dearest madam?

Chu. Not that we ought to car for titles given
By such a man as Oliver—a man
That all the world must own—

Crom. Made some mistakes

Sometimes when he conferr'd them: let his memory
Be spoken of by such as care for it.

Chu. Aye! aye!

Lady Ch. Perhaps a very well-meaning man—
Only misled.

Chu. Humph!

Cro. We may say what we please of him.

Chu. To be sure we may.

And some of us have cause. Some who stand here.
When I was forc'd against my will to take
An address from Quidlingboro,' I was sent back
Without a look or word. I should'nt have known him
From you.

Cro. But was not that your own fault? surely
You might have look'd.

Chu. Look'd ! you were never at court,
That is, in his time—just kiss hands—pass on—
An ostentatious, insolent, shallow person !
Offended our borough deeply—as a royalist
I am proud to declare to King Charles's friend—

Lady C. Nay ! nay !

Cro. Pity to interrupt such eloquence.

Chu. These are the things that change political feelings.

Cro. I believe you are right there.

Chu. Right! to be sure I am.
Who cares about parties, that has all he wants?

Cro. A party's but a number, striving to get
In a body what each can't get by himself

Chu. Exactly, you must have seen something of them.

Cr. Why yes

Lady C. How he us'd us about that baronetcy
That was promised!

at was promised

Ch. *Am. em. paper mind!*

Chu. Ayé, ayé, ne

at would not be worth much now, but

Lady C. I pray you !

Cro. Let us hear him.

Lady C.

Richard as I do—true, you have less c

never lov'd you as me.

Lady Ch. How very imprudent
To say that to his face!—he don't seem angry!
Chu. He has'nt the common feelings of a husband!
Lady C. If we talk of Richard, be it very kindly!
For even his enemies must acknowledge this—
They made themselves so, he ne'er wrong'd even them!
And Malice crying out upon his faults,
Must take good heed she do not blame his virtues.
For all that can be laid to Richard's charge
Is, that he lov'd all better than himself!
And yet kept for himself the noblest treasure—
A soul unstain'd!
Cro. You did not always think
So well of him. I've heard you blame his judgment.
Chu. His judgment? oh! we said in the town council
From the first he was not overwise.
Lady C. Town council!
But I should think the wisdom of town councils
Is just what would condemn him?
Chu. Yes, we're shrewd!
Cro. Pray you, walk in—we'll follow you.

Chu. (*Aside to LADY CHUBB.*) Strange people!
They won't blame anybody; you heard how she said
"Town Council?"
Lady Ch. Aye, I've often said you wanted
A woman there to teach you what to do.
Chu. We shall find out something here.
Cro. Pray you walk on.

[Enter DEAGLE.]

Dea. (*Whispers.*) Sir, sir, may I beg your ear a moment!
Cro. How!
Chu. More mysteries! he's surpris'd!
Lady Ch. They're out of something
They meant to give us.

Cro. Lead them in, dear wife!
I'll come to you directly.

Lady C. *Lady Chubb.*

[*Exeunt LADY CROMWELL, CHUBB and LADY CHUBB.*]

Cro. See me alone! I'll wait him here.

[*Exit DEAGLE.*]

My wife!
There's the first element of true content
Won. She approves, and trusts my judgment.

Enter INGOLDSBY.

Dick!

What! weary of the court? I'm glad to see you.
Welcome! you've come to share our humble peace,
And fill our joy to the brim. I wanted some one,
As true and good, friendly, and wise as you are,
To shew my pleasant household to. My wife
Is as content as I am. We've forgotten
There are such fools in the world as the ambitious
Learn'd in few hours the lesson of life,
For we are happy!

Ing. Happy!
Cro. Aye! come in
And taste our cheer! no very sumptuous fare
Except two fools, caught, pick'd, truss'd, dress'd, serv'd up,
Ready for laughter.

Ing. I must speak with you
Alone.

Cro. Ah! he said so!—well?

Ing. I have received
A letter from your wife.

Cro. Indeed!
Ing. At least

It purports so; the character is hers,
And it bears your seal.

Cro. Why this nice evidence?

Say she has written it, seal'd it with my seal,
Entreated you hither—what then has she done
More than I am glad to know?

Ing. You do not know—
I am sure you do not, what is in that letter—
Your words have shewn it.

Cro. I confess I do not—
Shew it me, let me learn.

Ing. I have it not—
The man who brought it to me, ask'd it back
A moment, then refused to give it me.

Cro. Why did you not take it?

Ing. He resisted that,
And had it come to open quarrel, words
Were in it, that for your sake should not be
Recall'd!

Cro. For my sake?

Ing. You'd not take the alarm
Before—I'm forced to speak out plainly.

Cro. Speak!
I'm mov'd now to your wish.

Ing. Have you concerted
A plot with Disbrowe—authoriz'd your wife
To solicit me to join in it for your safety?

Cro. No; on! what more?—don't pause, don't hesitate,
Speak out, and all.

Ing. 'Twas worded hurriedly,
But bidding me, for your sake, speak with them,
And act with them if need were; I am here
To answer it.

Cro. It must be forgery—
A base, foul, trick of theirs; 'tis true, these villains
Besieg'd me with such proffers as I loath'd
More than their former enmity—insulted me
By thinking I could mate with them—I told them so;
This is their worm-like vengeance on my tread.

Forget it.

Ing. If it be true !

Cro. (Crossing to gate,) True !—Robert ! Robert !

• *Enter ROBERT DEAGLE, at gate.*

Go to your mistress—say, that for a moment
I beg her presence here.

[*Exit DEAGLE, into house.*

It bears the lie

Upon its front—they would not let you keep it.

Ing. The fellow urg'd it was his own credential—

One Captain Darnel !

Cro. Darnel ! did that wretch ?

Sir, if there needed a full proof of falsehood
Of any crime of unheard villainy,
I have it in that name.

Enter LADY CROMWELL.

Come hither, wife !

Lady C. Ingoldsby !

Cro. Aye ! he says he comes to bring
An answer to a letter he believes
He has received from you.

Lady C. You have done nothing !
You have it safe ?—is it destroy'd ?

Cro. Good heaven !
Robert ! within ! let my black horse be saddled !
He's fleet !

DEAGLE appears, and exit at gate.

What strange presumption 'tis in man
To say "I'm happy !" Leave me, Ingoldsby—
These reptiles have wound round us with their film—
Let not the slime touch you. It will be noted
That you are absent.

Ing. Nay, the king being lodg'd

At hand, my duty is sufficient plea.

Cro. Begone ! we have our innocence alone
To guard us. You must shew yours clear—away !
Denounce, if need be, for yourself—yet she—
She is destroy'd then !

Ing. Teach me how
I best may save your fortunes.

Cro. Save my fortunes !
What have I now to treasure ? Save my fortunes !
Sir, I have nothing left to save but honor,
And that I'll strive to guard myself. Farewell !

Lady C. One moment ! What has happened ?

Ing. They've the letter
Addressed to me—if you have written it,
They will not fail to use it.

Lady C. How ? for what ?

Ing. To make your husband partner in rebellion
With them.

Lacy C. Sacrifice me ! Is there no means
To do that and save him ?

Cro. (To INGOLDSBY.) I pray you leave us.

Lady C. Answer me, Ingoldsby—there must be means—
The letter's worded so, it cannot touch him ;
I had care of that—altho' no other heed,
I am sure of it.

Cro. (To INGOLDSBY.) Begone ! look to yourself—
I will not have you staid to your own peril !
I will know all the truth, if I may know it,
And shall act as fits the occasion.

Ing. May heaven guard you.

[Exit.]

Cro. My friend, too ! of the few who really lov'd me,
Pledg'd to this miserable fate ! Ah, heaven !
How can I speak to her ? She has betray'd me !
Betray'd me to the slaves she saw me spurn.

Lady C. Richard, don't turn from me.
Great heaven ! what have I done ?

Cro. My seal was put
To a letter to Ingoldsby.

Lady C. Unwitting haste !
A wretched oversight ! but the same letter
Will prove 'twas mine alone —they will believe that,
Will they not ? Oh, my husband !

You left me, Richard,
And they departed not—they increased the fears
We both had entertain'd. I will not spare myself—
They tempted my poor vanity and pride.
I think—I am sure—I had not yielded to them,
But you returned while yet they spoke with me—
I saw your passion would not let them meet you ;
Heard from yourself all my worst fears confirm'd ;
Saw you depart as to some deed of danger—
Indeed, it seem'd so then to me ; they urg'd me again—
I wrote to Ingoldsby, as to your friend,
Bade him confer with those from whom alone
Aid seem'd at hand, and tried, though very weakly,
To centre all the danger in myself,
That I might win your safety, and old honors.
I know 'tis poor defence, but 'tis the truth,
And do not too much hate me for it.

Cro. The cowards !
To strike me here !—Dear wife ! my own dear wife !
Come on't what may, I acquit you of all blame ;
I did not wed with you to bear no weakness,
And yours sprang from your love, they tempted that—
Serpents !

Lady C. Oh, heaven !
That we had never met ! I should have been
A solitary thrall to will and passion—
Hapless myself, but not destroying you !
Pardon and blessing ! for we may not meet
Again where I may claim them.

Cro. Blessing, dear one !
Not pardon ; or the word, if you will have it—

Pardon ! with all my soul, but blessing most !

Enter DISBROWE, DARNEL, and BERRY.

How ! do you come to boast your villainy,
That you have duped her by a stratagem.
That befits !—heaven ! there is no name of guilt
Hath cruelty and baseness in a word
To speak your fact—avoid me—

Dis. Your own life
And hers, you know it, are now pledg'd with ours,
And you must hear us—aye, for her sake !

Lady C. Richard !
I heed me not.

Oro. Go, to our guests—it is my will
And need I should be left to deal with these
Alone. I heed well we are not interrupted ;
Go ! but not sadly—there's no wrath between us.

So,

[*Exit LADY CROMWELL, into cottage.*

Mir ! I warn you—I have suffer'd much ;
Tempt me again and try what I will do.
I warn you—you have earn'd a hate which charity
Itself can't pluck out of my heart. You seek me
For a mortal struggle.

Dis. For a mortal struggle,
Indeed I—the ports are clos'd—we're driven hither
For very life—to you, our only hope,
Which we'll not yield but with life—and if we die,
We clutch you with us. By that letter—

Oro. Wretch !

Do you dare ?

Dis. We're in a strait that must dare all
That deeds can bring on us—spare words, she's bound to us,
You know it, and you with her—will you perish
Both, or both live and reign ?

Oro. I have no answer

But this—speak to me as an enemy
Who owns no faith with you, or—which I'd crave—
Be silent and begone !

Dis. Can't life, death, power,
For her too, win your hearing ?

Dar. When he knows
The truth, the certainty of what we speak.
Sir ! you've to choose between the throne and the block ;
King Charles is here hard by at a lone hall—
The owner has a wife, or sister, so
The king comes privately, without a guard,
Almost without attendance.

Cro. At yon hall ?

Dar. Aye, sir. (*To DISBROWE.*) He listens !

Dis. Cousin ! we alone
Could make sure prisoner of the King of England,
And force him by the peril of his life
To give us safety, and whatever more
We should demand.

Cro. Seize on his person ?

Dis. Aye !

And hold his person, too, against more force
Than can be raised to take it from our grasp.
There is a regiment quartered in yon vale,
On whom, perhaps, the king relies for guard—
The regiment, that was Falconberg's, of whom
Every man's devoted to yourself.

Cro. Falconberg's ! Aye, they were true to me.

Dar. And now they are to be disbanded, and their road
Must lie between starvation and the gallows.
We have urg'd them, in your name, for the brief time
Requir'd an action—speak, and every sword
Is as obedient as in your own hand—
Nay, scarcely waits your word to do the deed
Shall save all, and enthrone you !

Dis. Now, your answer.

Dar. (*Aside to them.*) He ponders—he will yield.

Cro. In the town and villages
They have their quarters.

Dar. Aye, sir.

Dis. Cousin, speak !

Dar. If we may take the rest of a few moments,
And yonder room seems empty, the Lord Richard
Will soon determine. (*To Disbrowz.*) Give him time to
yield—

That he pauses is enough.

Dis. Determine quickly
If you need thought for it, lest the soldiers move,
And so prevent our leading. We will wait you.

[*Exit into cottage.*]

Cro. To break my honest word ! to join with them !
Or see her perish !—would the king believe me,
Should I declare the truth ?

Dea. (*Without.*) Stay, sir—you pass not—
You must speak with my master.

Deagle brings in *SIR RICHARD WILLIS*, *guarding him with a pistol.*

Cro. Ah ! that miscreant here !
Then all is trac'd and known. You are come hither
To betray—

Wil. I ?

Cro. 'Tis your trade—do I not know you ?
You would sell me to Charles as you have sold
His friends to me, but with a bloodier purpose.
Speak *spy*—and though I may not stain my sword
With blood like yours, I'll cast you 'mongst the men
Whom you would make your victims ; they are here,
They shall know you, and you know your fate by them.
We are watch'd ! betray'd !

Wil. You are—one of themselves,
Darnel, is ready to betray you.

Cre. Ah !
And you are join'd with him. (*To Deagle.*) Let him not stir.
My tablets ! not a moment ! You will give
These lines to your lady. Keep that traitor fast
And silent. There ! (*Gives tablets.*)
They think the game is earth'd.
The chace is not spent yet.

[*Exit at gate.*

Dea. How to bestow him,
While I deliver this ?

Wil. Keep me from the sight
Of Disbrowe and his mates—I have no wish
To leave you.

Dea. Aye ! I'll be secure. (*Calls at window.*) Hist ! hist !
Madam ! a word so please you. While you're quiet
You're safe from this—stir, it will serve to stop you.

*Enter LADY CROMWELL, from cottage, followed by SIR JACOB
and LADY CHUBB.*

These tablets, madam, from my master.

Lady C. (Reading.) Gone !
" Must be sudden, lest another should prevent me."
Would he yield himself a ransom for my fault ?
Who's this ?

Dea. Sir Richard Willis, madam.

Lady C. He !

Your master bade you stay him. It must be
That he would seek the king as once before.
He did—but mine's that office now—worst punishment
To smite my crime in him. Who are those men
In yonder room ?

Dea. They're Disbrowe and his followers.

Lady C. They !—now, thank heaven ! surely the true traitors
May pay the price of treason, and redeem
Those that they would have sacrificed. I'll offer them

To the king's vengeance. (*To SIR JACOB.*) You, sir, are a magistrate;
I charge you, by your allegiance, to secure
The men in yonder room.

Chu. Me! I am alone!

Lady C. As you would not bear part yourself in treason—
As you'd regain the honors you have lost,
Secure them!

Chu. Mercy on us! What! my knighthood?

Lady Ch. Is it possible!

Chu. What can be done?

Lady Ch. What done?

When our title's to be had again! Stay here—
Only delay them—I'll rouse all the town,
The *posse comitatus*, but we'll have
Our title back again.

[*Exit at gate.*

Chu. That woman ought
To be a general—but how to stop them?

Lady C. Robert! (*To WILLIS.*) You, sir, if you can join for
once

In a just deed, which wins you profit, too—
We may count upon your help

Wil. Madam, my duty—
This gentleman's, if he be a magistrate,
Is to secure not only them, but you.

Chu. What! Mistress Clarke?

Wil. The Lady Dorothy Cromwell,
Wife of the late Protector.

Chu. Master Clarke!
Was he!—did I?—why he was the king's friend;
Or was it forgery? that paper—

Lady C. Look, sir!
Torn from that very paper, is the pardon
Of Richard Cromwell in his proper name—
Sign'd by the king's own hand. Obey my will,

By that authority; more, if you need it—
There's an address, signed by Sir Jacob Chubb,
To the late Protector—shall it to the king?
I'll bear it to him myself! 'tis in the house,
For my own servants are enough to stay
The capture of my person. Will you aid me?

Chu. I'll try—I think—was ever magistrate
Plac'd in a strait like this?

Lady C. Robert, detain
Sir Richard still; he has shown us how to trust him.

Secure him, as this gentleman shall show you.

(To SIR J.) Remain here with your prisoners till you hear
From me. I place our lives, sir, in your hands—
Preserve them, and regain your former honour;
Dastards, that made my love the price of blood,
'Tis just it should sell yours.

[Exit at gate.

Chu. My prisoners!
Pray heaven, they mayn't know they are my prisoners,
Till I can make them safe. I should like to see them—
If I could bar them in.

(Looks in at the window.) There's that grim knave
Was here this morning with "All's right!"—the others
Scarce better looking—do they see me? Sounds!
They're stirring—moving to the door! Good luck!
What's to be done?

[Stands back, unobserved.

Enter DISBROWE, DARNEI, and BERRY, from the cottage.

Dis. (To DEAGLE.) Where is your master, sir?

Dea. That's more than I can tell, sir!

Dis. In the house?

Dea. I think not.

Dar. He equivocates—he's gone!

Speak fellow—is he fled?

Dea. I have said already,

I know not where he is.

Dis. (*Seeing WILLIS.*) Whom have you here?

Dea. One I am set to guard.

Dis. Indeed!

Wil. I am known

To Master Darnel.

Dar. Aye, you are!—shall I say

How we became acquainted? Hark ye, friend—

I might have needed you, but as it is,

You're happy if I'm silent. (*To DEAGLE.*) You refuse
To tell us more?

Dea. I have no more to tell.

Dar. (*To his fellows.*) We must not waste the time.

Dis. What would you do?

Dar. Strike the main blow—we'll to the hall at once.

Give check mate to the king—we've won the game,
Whatever else is on the board—away!

Chu. They must not go! Sir, I must beg—you see
A magistrate—I charge you, gentlemen,
Surrender in the king's name.

Dis. To what force?

Chu. To one, I wish were here—it is my duty.

Dar. Psha! (*Striking him down as he interposes.*)

Chu. Stay them! If you stir you will be met.

I've force at hand!

Dis. Ha! ha! employ it then.

But another word of insolence, a sword
May spoil your prating.

Dar. There's as great a knave

As you could hope for, for a prisoner.

Keep him you have, and welcome. Fare you well!

Dis. Come, we have but a life a piece to lose,
And they are stak'd already. To the hall!

[*Exeunt DISBROWE, DARNEL, and BERRY.*]

Chu. What can be done? to let those traitors go
Will be misprision of treason—my own head
Is not safe on my shoulders.

Re-enter LADY CHUBB.

Lady Ch. They are gone!
I met them. We are ruin'd. I had sent
Two men to the town—I knew what your head was worth
If I staid away.

Chu. Not much—but I'd fain keep it.

Lady Ch. To let your prisoners go!—you might have been
A knight again, and I—

Chu. What could I do?

There's one left.

Lady Ch. There's a chance—take him to the king.

Chu. But if they go that way, there'll be a battle.

Every true subject will be called to fight—
You know I'm civil, and no military.

Lady Ch. You're nothing if you lose this only chance.
Take him to the king—no doubt he is worth something,
If they want folks to hang.

Chu. Aye, come along!

Wil. With all my heart, I would be at the court,
If possible before them—for this Darnel
May implicate us all.

Chu. May he! Come on!

Lady Ch. Keep him a prisoner!

Chu. To be sure take care of him—
'Twould be a pretty errand to his Majesty
If I hadn't secur'd him. I hope he'll turn out
The greatest knave of all, for our sakes.
Now march—if you go quietly, I may speak
A word for you to his Majesty! March on!

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE—*An apartment in a Nobleman's country seat—folding doors in centre.*

Enter KING CHARLES and LORD HYDE.

King. Tut ! Willis is as many knaves in one
As there are parties to be cheated by him.
And while you think, my good Lord Chancellor,
You're using him, the rascal makes an auction
Of the authority you've lent him. Whom
Pretends he to betray to you ?

Hyde. A person,
He says, of no mean consequence.

King. Ha ! ha !
Not even a name ! You've given the pirate license
To run down any goodly ship he can—
He'll find, or make a traitor for you, doubt not.

Hyde. I trust his manner, not his words !—his prey
Is close at hand. I beseech your Majesty,
If you still trust these matters to my care,
To give me leave to treat them as I think
Behoves for your own weal.

King. Ah ! you're offended !
Hatch your own mare's nest as you please, my lord,
I will not spoil the brood.

Hyde. In serious speech,
If I may crave that from your Majesty,
I have full authority to deal in this ?

King. Yes, by my honor. Wherefore am I tax'd
So sternly ?

Hyde. Pardon, sire : such a protection
As that you gave to Richard Cromwell might
Impeach a minister, who must give answer
To you and to the country for his deeds.

King. Still urging that !—you make me serious now.
I gave my word in surety for his honor.
I knew the man at a glance, he spoke out bravely !
If he deceive me, punish not alone
His deed, but his falsehood ; I'll not interpose
A word, or look, or thought on his behalf.
Deal with him as you choose, and as you ought,
If there be cause.

Hyde. Thanks to your Majesty
For your sake, not for mine.

King. Nay, a fair truce.
Blame me no more for my idleness coming hither—
You are welcome to the work of the whole kingdom.

Hyde. I but regretted that without a guard,
You should trust your royal person—

King. Tush ! our truce.
Lady C. (Without.) 'Tis dangerous to stay me, sir, for the
king ;
Withhold me not—he's here.

Attendant. (Entering.) I pray you, madam,
'Till I may speak—

King. What means this noise, so near us ?
Attendant. (Entering.) A lady, sire, craves earnestly.

Enter LADY C.

Lady C. My liege,
Let misery for once break down the bar
That stands before relief—mercy, sire, mercy !

King. For whom ?
Lady. C. Nay, for yourself, sire—for your state !
King. Speak with her, my Lord Chancellor.

For you, sir,

Look you keep stricter watch.

[Exit Attendant.

Lady C. Hear me yourself, sire,
I entreat you—I come not to ask alone ;
And what I ask is mercy, such as kings
May love to grant—generous, wise, not harmful !
Nay, scarcely that—such justice as the law
Would overlook—belief in such a truth
As it's dull marble ear can't listen to.
I know not how to plead my suit to you,
Unless you would grant it first and hear it after—
Though, by my soul, which ne'er conceived a lie,
Knowing the truth, as the next world shall show it,
You there will bless me, if I win it from you.

King. You would save yourself?

Lady C. Myself !

Sire, you shall see how I would save myself—
But that is from my purpose.

King. Speak more clearly.

What would you have me pardon or believe ?

Lady C. There's a conspiracy against your state, sire,
To which they fain would link one innocent ;
That one they have environed craftily,
With every proof that malice or desire
Of help from such a power could frame. But grant me
The full security of the king's word,
That one is free as nought had ever been,
And I declare all.

Hyde. And what pledge have we
That you speak truth ?

Lady C. One, that so touches me,
You cannot doubt it, as I speak it.

Hyde. Speak all !
Seek not to traffic with the royal mercy ;
What is fitting will be done.

Lady C. What you call fitting

May slay my heart, entrap my faith, my soul.
Promise, dread sire—whom with no arrogant speech
I'd tempt or anger, they're my griefs are insolent
If I offend you. I have but one chance
To repair a crime, for so my heart will call it,
Against all I should love, 'tis in my prayer,
And in your mercy listening to it—hear me,
And save much more than life.

Hyde. It is your husband
You mean? Who is this woman?

Lady C. From my agony
Wrench, if you dare, the secret I would hide.
There have been torturers have torn the body,
'Till, amid shrieks, they have drawn forth confession,
But in the judgment day they shall stand clear,
Compared to him who would rend a woman's heart
To pluck out danger to the thing she loves.

King. Nay, do not urge her. Have you more
That I must hear?

Lady C. For yourself, sire, listen yet!
There are those who have conspired against your safety,
Your kingdom's peace—your crown.

Hyde. They are secured
In the people's hearts, beyond the reach of treason.

Lady C. Have not the lessons of the few past years
Taught you to check such boasts? Have none ere now
Stood seemingly secure, flattered by words,
Such as you speak, to be betray'd by them
To a wretchedness made tenfold by past glory.

King. Do you taunt me, woman?

Lady C. Nay, I did not think
Of what those near to your Majesty had suffered.

Hyde. I read your thoughts still. Call it what you please,
My duty 'tis to note them. What you are,
Your speech itself betrays.

King. Ah! of herself

She spoke—the Lady Cromwell.

Lady C. You have silenced me,
Whate'er you would know more.

King. I do not fear
Aught you can tell or hide.

Lady C. Oh! do not scorn me!
Despair is a bay'd tiger—those are banded
Who, if they fail, will perish terribly,
Grasping revenge beforehand. I can speak
And save.

King. You have asked for justice—if your husband
Be innocent he is free—but to the law
His deeds must now be answered, and it behoves him
To show them clearly. For me, I have interfered
Rashly, against the council of my friends
To serve him. Let him look to it. Let orders
Be given to secure him to his answer.
To you, my lord, we have committed all.
Our sole command is justice.

Lady C. Then may heaven
Declare the truth. There is no other way
Than silence. I'll not tell you by a look,
Or "aye" or "no;" you might have spared much blood
By one kind, one rightful word—enough—I've spoken.

Re-enter ATTENDANT.

Att. Three men, sire, beg an audience of your Majesty,
They say for needful service.

King. I will see them—
They may declare what you conceal.

Hyde. (*Going up towards ATTENDANT.*) Assemble
What servants can be found—let them be posted
In the ante-chamber, ready at a word,
And listen, and be swift upon a call.

King. There are but three.
Hyde. (*Coming down to the King.*) I would your Majesty

Were better guarded, though there were but one.

King. As you will—Admit those men.

[ATTENDANT goes to the door.

Enter DISBROWE, BERRY, and DARNEL—Exit the ATTENDANT.

Lady C. Dare they come hither?
Would they impeach?—he said so—sire, those men
Are the movers of the treason, which I came
To declare and to prevent. Let them be seized!
If I speak not truth, fall tenfold vengeance on me,
But if I do, though I deliver up
Myself with them to justice, that I save you
Now from their malice, let it be some claim
You will spare him I pleaded for.

King. We shall hear
The truth now.
Lady C. Hear it, sire, from me
If you exact it in my blood; I come
To yield myself to death, if dying witness
May weigh down slander.

Dis. Prithee, lady, peace.
You waste your words more harmfully than idly—
We are still your husband's friends!

Lady C. My husband's friends!
Foul wrong to him to say he has such friends—
I am not twice your dupe.

Dis. We pardon, cousin,
The womanish folly that has brought you hither.
To sell the lives, can best assure your own.
Here is a letter, with your husband's seal,
Written by you—enough, if there were need
To shew the king whose deed is the revolt:
We need but place that paper in his hands,
And leave you to his mercy, and were others
As weak and peevish with their offered fortunes,
As I live, so would we do.

King. What would you here, sirs ?

Dis. Confess, if you would have us, sire, the plot,
Of which, it seems, this lady has accused us,
And for ourselves, and our confederates,
Of whom her husband, Richard Cromwell's one,
Herself another, treat with your Majesty
For pardon, for security, and means
Of living, that may keep us true to you.

King. Upon your knees, praying for life, and yielding
All you can give to atone what you have done,
You might perchance be heard—these are the terms
On which kings treat with their rebellious subjects.

Dis. One king at least, sire, might not treat so proudly,
Nor can his son with us ; we can await
The forces which are gathering to our aid,
And grant your Majesty time to weigh our suit
With calmer temper—but if Richard Cromwell
Come with them, it is in his will alone
To make conditions, should they claim return
Of the throne in which you have succeeded him.

Lady C. Sire, it is false—they know that he is free.
As we are guilty of this wrong to you,
This is some new device against his life,
As your Majesty's safety.

Dar. Pray you, madam, listen,
If I may urge that penance to your will.
He left us, but secured the spy who came
To search, and thwart our purposes—he knew
From us, at once his danger and his safety.
He knows he has friends at hand—not only us,
But the regiment, Lord Falconberg's, most true to him.

King. (*To Hyde.*) Ah ! Falconberg's—is it so ?

Hyde. It is too true, sire.

Dar. He knows that he will find the king alone
His easy hostage—that the sceptre's his,
If he but reach his hand for it.

King. Odds fish !
Confound the rascal—every word is true !

Lady C. Have I crossed his purpose again ? Do I live
Only to bring him ruin ?

Dis. It were well
You thwart not his adherents, or reveal
His counsel to his foes.

King. Let it cost life,
Life is not worth submission to these ruffians.
Within there !

*Enter two or three ATTENDANTS.**

Dis. Friends, for his Majesty's sake I charge you,
No step, no word—but as we give you leave.
Sir, know us for no children in this game ;
We did not come with halters round our necks
To sue for grace, but with our arms beside us
For pens to write fair terms. Bid them surrender !

King. No !

Dis. Then I bid these people to note well
Your Majesty's safety answers for their peace.
We waste no strength on them. Hear you that trampling
In the court-yard ?—Our friends are with us now.
Be thankful, cousin, the event has stayed
The mischief of your tongue. Hear you the footsteps
Along the hall ?—their sound may tell your Majesty
You have ceased to reign.

King. Still I can perish, sirs,
As becomes a king.

Enter RICHARD CROMWELL and OFFICERS.

Madam, you behold the loyalty
Of him you pleaded for.

Dar. There is no need
Of pleading now—your highness may command
Dis. Long live the Lord Protector!
King. Ah! Hyde! Hyde!
My folly has ensnar'd me. If I have lived weakly,
I must not die ignobly. Which of you
Makes the king prisoner?—there are hands among you
That would not spare to wash in royal blood.
Come on who will (*to Cromwell*)—you, sir, whom I have
pardoned—
You, for whose honour my own word was pledged
To those who knew its worthlessness, and laughed
At my idiot trust in you—a Stuart's trust
In a Cromwell!—now, what would you force
From me, your king still?
Cro. Justice!—which your Majesty
Shall grant to me, even in your own despite.
Know me for what I am—sirs, seize their weapons—
There are your prisoners.

[*Pointing to Disbrowe.*

King. Say, sir, what means this?
Cro. That your Majesty's soldiers, led without commission,
Beyond the hope to serve you, by a man
Whom you styl'd your friend, are come to place themselves,
Fearing you need such guard, under your orders.
I have served them for a guide. Here's one had led them
By the same road to another purpose.

Dar. How!
Have they betrayed us?
Cro. They've example for it,
And for less cause. They await, sire, your commands.
Dis. Spiritless slave! that might have held the power
You proffer now so tamely!
Cro. What to lose it
Again to such as Disbrowe?

Attendant. Another prisoner,
So please your Majesty.

SIR JACOB CHUBB, &c. bring in SIR RICHARD WILLIS.

Chu. (*Between DISBROWE and LADY CROMWELL.*) Ah! the
knaves are there!

I beg your Majesty's pardon, but these men
Are my lawful prize, captured by me; I appeal
To Mrs. Clarke.
She was to come to know your Majesty's pleasure,
While I was left upon the dangerous service
Of keeping them prisoners;—but for your Majesty—

King. Of course every body will do every thing
For me—that will serve himself—but they escaped.

Chu. I received a severe contusion falling backwards
In striving to prevent them, please your Majesty.

King. Sir Richard Willis prisoner!

Wil. But an evidence,
So please you, sire, whom this wise gentleman
Thought fit, thus to secure.

Chu. You were call'd a knave
By every person present, and I trust
Such are worth the bringing.

King. Mirror of magistrates!

Chu. That your Majesty should deign to call me so—
Now, sir, the power has been so lately yours,
And even now seems so little mine, I bid you
Still to request, at least, what you would have
For those who wrong'd you. Vengeance on your foes
Is surely yours.

Cro. If it be mine, my liege,
Let it take all needed for security,
Nothing for wrath. I would pray you spare their lives!

My cause till now has cost no drop of blood—
Let me boast that still.

King. It shall be duly thought on.
Lead them away !

[*Exeunt DISBROWE, DARNEL, and BERRY, guarded.*

King. Sir, you are now released
From your onerous charge. Your name?

Chu. May it please your Majesty,
My name was once—if it might be again—

Cro. Sir Jacob Chubb—may't please your Majesty
Only to call him so. My father's sword
Laid knighthood on his shoulders, which my fall
Struck off again.

King. (*Knighting him.*) Arise, Sir Jacob Chubb!
Chu. A hundred thousand thanks to your Majesty.

A knight on both sides, that can't be unknighted,
Whichever party's uppermost. Lady Chubb!
She came up with me, for you gave us hopes—

(*To RICHARD.*) May she kiss your Majesty's hand as Lady
Chubb!

[*KING bows—CHUBB goes to door and brings in LADY CHUBB.*

Come in, good woman—it will break your heart
For joy—you're Lady Chubb again.

Lady Ch. (*Kneeling, in tears, at the KING's feet.*) Your
Majesty!

King. Rise—I would dry all tears.

Lady Ch. Your Majesty can do whatever you please
With any woman.

[*CHARLES salutes her.*

Chu. I have seen a king—a real king—kiss my wife.

Lady Ch. This binds all Quidlingboro' to your Majesty—

Chu. As long as the Chubbs outvote the Chuckleheads,
Long live the king and ourselves !

King. Hyde, I'm a statesman.

Had I not given that protection—

Hyde. Aye, sire,

The event is fortunate.

King. Very foolish things

Have been proved wise—by a fortunate event

A king should have that chance as well as his ministers.

(To CROMWELL.) But for yourself ? What more is in our

power

To grant you ?

Cro. Nothing, sire.

King. You will not shame

My gratitude, or show that you refuse

Forgiveness for my wrong—despise the honors

That I can, and ought to grant.

Cro. Sire, I am no anchorite,

To affect disdain of fortunes or of honors—

The lesson I have learned is not to buy them

At too large a price, and not to fear to yield them

When they must be retain'd by other's ill.

For my own quiet, as your Majesty's weal,

Mine is a private fortune.

King. You will return

To your rural peace.

Cro. Peace would I find indeed,

But it will not be here. I am the centre

Of ill men's wrathful hopes—to break that bond

We must quit our country.

King. Self-exiled !

Cro. Aye, sire !

As child from parent, whom it would not burden,

And loves most leaving, may it be at rest,

When we are gone, and it's peace long assured,

I'll bear the hope, a child's hope, sire, to spend
In elder age, a few brief years, where first
I drew my breath, and lay me down at last
On the bosom that first nourished me, thanking heaven
I have not wounded it.

King. 'Till then——

Cro. 'Till then

I let me rest still what your Majesty has styl'd me,
Your humble, faithful friend—poor MASTER CLARKE !

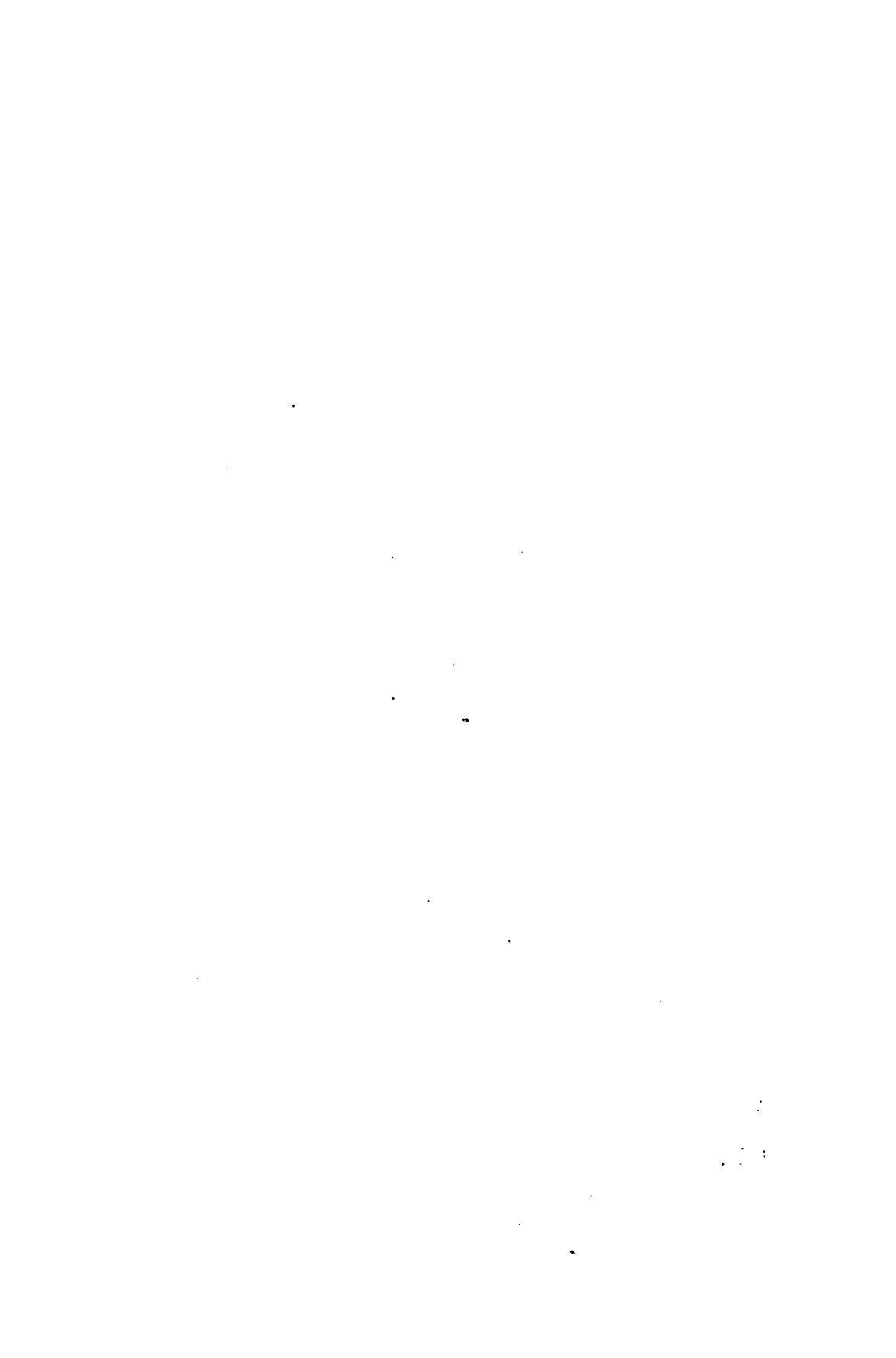
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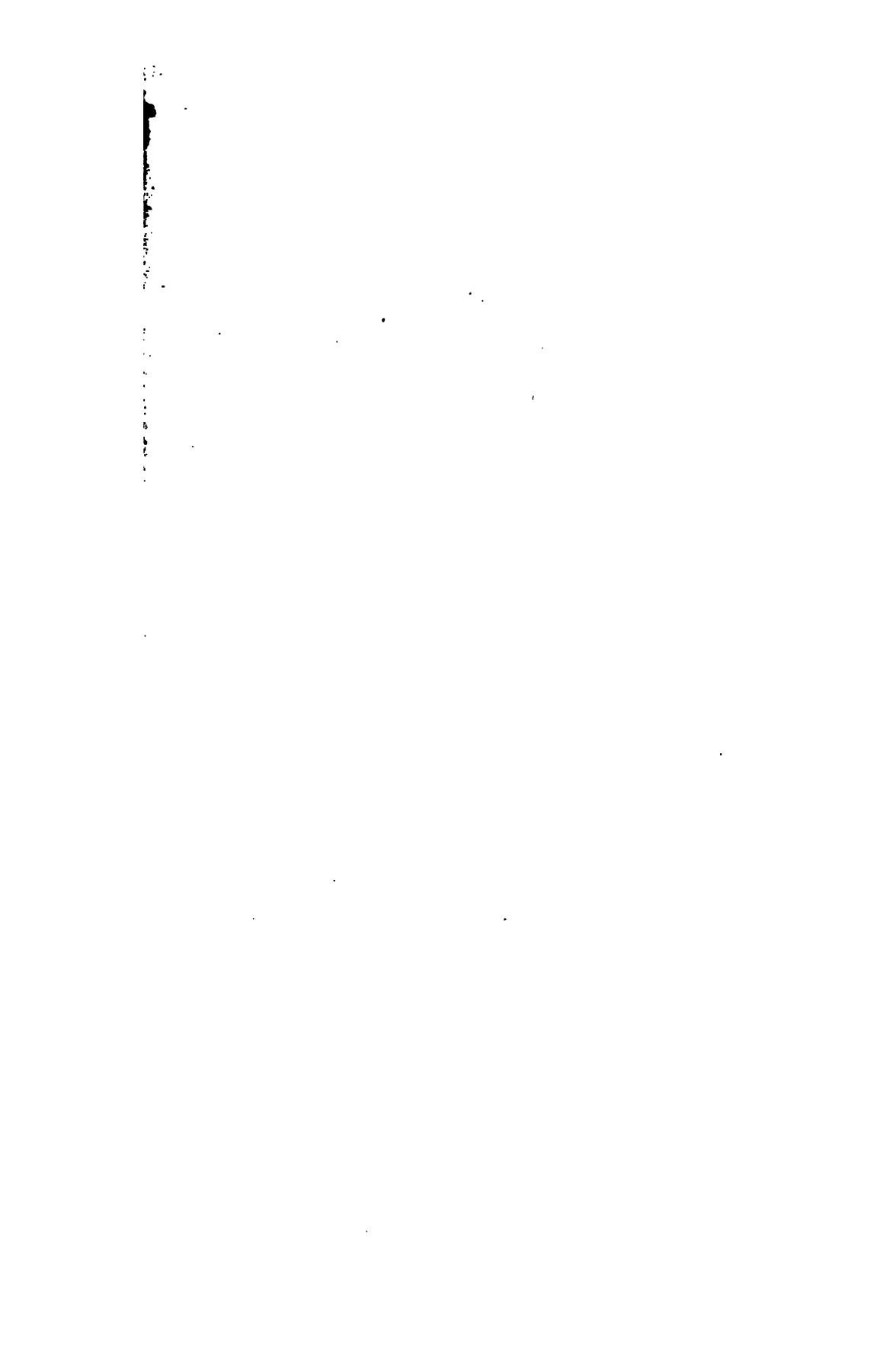
Disposition of Characters.

R.

Curv. LADY CH. KING. LADY C. Cro.

L.







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